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New York

Co-Chairperson: El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba ..... (President of the Gabonese Republic)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Göran Persson ..... (Prime Minister of the Kingdon of Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Uribe Vélez (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate Sweden on its election to the presidency of the General Assembly.

Colombia reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and to a broad and inclusive multilateralism. The reform process must have as its main objective the strengthening of States and of their capacity to respond effectively to the needs of their populations. The Millennium Development Goals are achievable, so long as we all make efforts and concessions. Developing countries will be able to meet the Goals when they are able to compete and to have free market access. That could be made possible through the elimination of subsidies, in particular those that benefit agriculture in developed countries.

With the achievement of the Goals, in addition to deepening an approach based on assistance and aid, countries must consolidate their national capacities and prospects for sustainable development, which provide for the generation of wealth, progress and prosperity. Colombia understands that we must be make haste to achieve the Millennium Development Goals so that in time we can achieve the democratic legitimacy that emerges from security, public freedoms, the independence of institutions and transparency.

In my country, we have incorporated the Millennium Development Goals into our national development plan and into a discussion project we have named "Visión Colombia Segundo Centenario", which will make it possible to achieve the Goals by 2015.

Hand in hand with democratic security to defeat terrorism and to guarantee the freedoms of all my compatriots, along with transparency and citizen participation to defeat corruption, we have made a commitment to eradicate poverty and improve equity.

Today, our social policy has seven pillars, some of which I would like to touch on.

An educational revolution, the axis of social cohesion, is the path by which we will be able to ensure equity, a fair distribution of income and the opening of new channels of social services, without which democracy remains only half realized.

We must also focus on strengthening micro-business and small and medium-sized enterprises in order to overcome the barriers blocking access to credit. We so despise the discrimination that sullies democracy and social protection that we are committed within three years to ensure access to health services for all the poor, to make strides in providing food for

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children and facilitate their access to education, and to provide care for the elderly.

By the end of this year, Colombia's goal is to have 500,000 families with children in school receiving State aid for the feeding and education of their children. In the near future that will rise to 1 million families. This will ensure that they are part of the educational revolution. By 2006, 10 million children will benefit from food aid programmes and 570,000 elderly will receive financial and food subsidies.

We are also making serious efforts to help the internally displaced, aiding some 20,000 ex-combatants from violent groups that have been reintegrated into society and 33,000 families in the Guardabosques forest protection programme, who are paid a stipend to give up drugs cultivation and who are now helping both in the recovery of tropical forests as well as keeping their areas free of illegal drugs. Aid to those three sectors of society — the displaced, the reintegrated and the Guardabosques families — will cost $300 million in 2006 alone.

With regard to the reform of United Nations organs, we believe that bodies entrusted with development should be strengthened and made into real forums for addressing the issues facing developing countries in all their diversity, including middle-income countries.

The proposal to create a peacebuilding commission must focus on establishing policies and strategies for national development programmes and initiatives for countries emerging from conflict.

The success of the United Nations will become clear when, having completed its mission, it withdraws from those countries that have asked for its help. It fails when it remains in place for decades and creates a dependency of the national structures on the international system. The United Nations fails when it takes over the State's responsibilities rather than creating a national capacity for autonomous and independent governance. The role of States cannot be replaced by the Organization. Every nation must be endowed with the means and mechanisms to overcome challenges and respond efficiently to the needs of its people.

Regarding the proposal to create a human rights council, we believe that it must be approached with a view to cooperating with States and building national capacity in each country. In the new council, the punitive approach and finger-pointing that have politicized the matter and weakened the capacity of the United Nations to contribute and support States in the promotion and protection of human rights must not prevail.

Consensus must guide decision-making in the reform process. Only in that way will it be possible to meet the expectations of true and significant change. We must all participate in the reform process, respecting the principle of sovereign equality and guided by the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Elías Antonio Saca González, President of the Republic of El Salvador.

President Saca González (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador sets great store by the United Nations as a forum for dialogue and understanding geared towards developing forms of collective cooperation for addressing the global threats of the twenty-first century.

From that perspective, we have participated with great interest in the comprehensive reform process of the United Nations system, in particular in order to endow it with greater democracy, transparency and legitimacy to respond in a balanced manner to the interests of all its Member States.

We believe that the outcome document of this Meeting will provide a basis for the ongoing process of change that the Organization truly requires. However, I must say that the outcome document does not meet our expectations and that discussion must continue until a broader consensus has been obtained. The implementation of the commitments that have been made will require effort, resources and, above all, political resolve on the part of States. We believe that the United Nations, with its wealth of experience, is the ideal institution for coordinating and harmonizing international cooperation towards consolidating those efforts, in particular with respect to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

I wish to touch upon several issues that I feel to be of particular interest and great relevance to the goals we have established.

El Salvador shares the view that democracy does not belong to any single country or region. Instead, it is a universal right and our country therefore supports the establishment of the democracy fund.

We all know the negative impact that global challenges have had on peace, security, stability and the development of peoples. We believe that the most suitable mechanism for addressing such challenges is one based on global consensus and collective security, as enshrined in the Charter. In that context, we warmly welcome the proposal to establish a peacebuilding commission. We believe that such a commission would channel the peacebuilding processes by establishing close links between peacebuilding, political agreements, and short-, medium- and long-term security and development.

In all humility and great confidence, I reaffirm that the people of El Salvador offer one of the best examples of a true desire for peace. After many years of deadly conflict, the peace agreements of 1992 came into force under the auspices of this Organization and with the cooperation of friendly Governments. That, in turn, paved the way for the people of El Salvador to forge a society that now lives in peace and democracy and fights for its well-being and development.

My Government feels that comprehensive development must be one of the fundamental and priority objectives of the United Nations. We fully support the concept linking it intrinsically and interdependently to peace and security. We are committed to the Millennium Development Goals and support the establishment of a global partnership for development, which we feel should be based on solidarity and generosity, taking account of the differences between regions and countries, their level of development, capacities, resources and constraints.

El Salvador wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the category of low and medium income countries, to which we belong. Given our level of development, we have been marginalized from international cooperation, which has had an impact on our national development programmes and our attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. We believe that a special mechanism could be established to valorize the efforts of States to implement economic and social programmes and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals. It would serve as a basis for identifying special treatment in technical and financial cooperation programmes as a way to reward and motivate such domestic development policies.

In that context, we feel that it is important to be able to depend on international support for the creation of innovative development financing mechanisms, including the cancellation of foreign debt in favour of social programmes, especially in the areas of education and health care.

Five years ago, we committed ourselves to attaining the Millennium Development Goals, and our people has expectantly watched us work towards their accomplishment. Fair and balanced globalization has provided many with an opportunity to progress towards greater development, and each and every country must shoulder its responsibility for accomplishing its own development agenda. We know that all national efforts must be supplemented and complemented by the solidarity and cooperation of the international community. As leaders, we are duty-bound to redouble our efforts to fully meet those objectives, and thus to work to improve the living conditions of all humankind by shaping a world that is freer, safer and free from misery for all — a task to which we remain fully committed.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, President of the Republic of Guyana.

President Jagdeo: The international development goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals, which we set ourselves at the Millennium Summit five years ago and which we are called upon to review at this Meeting, have been a major benchmark for development. Addressing as they do such fundamentals as health and education, they constitute important prerequisites for our economic and social advancement.

Despite serious financial and human constraints, my country has made appreciable progress towards those objectives. Through a progressive poverty-reduction strategy and the allocation of more budgetary resources to the social sector, we have managed to reach the poor in our society and to provide them with increased opportunities to improve their lives.

Sad to say, however, our hard-won gains are now threatened by forces and influences that are well

beyond our control. An example of this is the fact that, although Europe has declared support for the Millennium Development Goals, the European Commission has nonetheless made proposals to drastically reduce the price of sugar exports from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, which, if implemented, will deal a devastating blow to their economies, forcing a large number of people into extreme poverty. In the case of Guyana, our economy stands to lose some $40 million per annum, a sum that negates the $8 million in debt relief which is expected to flow from the recent G-8 decisions. That action is typical of some developed countries, which, while giving with great fanfare some assistance to the developing countries, quietly take away even more through harmful trade and economic policies. Worse yet, despite their asseverations of partnership and commitment to consultation and coherence, they decide unilaterally on measures that adversely affect the lives of millions in the developing countries. As it is, therefore, we will be hard put to achieve the Millennium Development Goals within the time-frames set.

Altogether, our experience — one that I know is shared by many others — has been daunting. We cannot but conclude that, while the realization of the Millennium Development Goals provides the necessary foundation for national development, adequate economic and social progress cannot be achieved in the absence of a more comprehensive framework that encompasses significant development and investment flows, wider debt relief, more equitable trade and economic cooperation as well as the transfer of science and technology for development purposes.

These economic and social challenges are made, as the Secretary-General's report reminds us, all the greater by the political insecurity that is the defining reality of today's world. The threats to the security of States — more particularly small and vulnerable ones — have been greatly magnified by the spread of terrorism, transboundary crime, disease, arms and drug trafficking. Most of our countries are ill-equipped, because of scarce resources, to defend themselves against such encroachments.

Contemporary circumstances have brought us to a watershed moment. The multiplication of threats to our common existence, whatever their genesis, represents as foreboding a scenario as any the scourge of war could conjure up. We must act to contain such dangers by strengthening the United Nations so that it can perform its functions.

For more than a decade, we have been engaged in the examination of ways and means to reform the United Nations. On the basis of the recommendations that have emerged, we must take action at this session of the General Assembly to make the Organization more democratic in its decision-making and more effective in the discharge of the many mandates with which it has been entrusted.

Of particular urgency is the need to reform the Security Council — the organ responsible for the maintenance of global peace and security — to allow it better to cope with the various threats to our safe and secure existence. The records of the Working Group which was set up for this purpose will show that widespread agreement had been reached on the expansion of the Council in both categories of membership to provide greater balance in representation and greater credibility to the Council's activities. This has presented us with a window of opportunity which, if we do not take advantage of it, may close again and remain indefinitely closed.

Let us therefore not be faint-hearted, but rather boldly accelerate and complete the process of reform, so that the principles and purposes for which the United Nations stands may be fully implemented.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

President Kabbah: This summit offers us a unique opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations system and to further strengthen international cooperation for global security and development.

The events of the past few days clearly demonstrate that we all are deeply committed to the achievement of those objectives. It is also clear that differences remain among us on the appropriate methods for accomplishing our objectives, as reflected in the outcome document that is before us for adoption.

We note the general progress that has been made by many countries towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are concerned, however, that many sub-Saharan countries,

particularly post-conflict countries, have not achieved as much as their efforts would have justified.

We are encouraged by the fact that several initiatives, including those by the Africa Commission, chaired by The Right Honourable Tony Blair, have been proposed to identify the obstacles to our progress and to determine the appropriate strategies for overcoming them.

Many of the recommendations from these initiatives have already been endorsed by the donor community, including the G-8 and multilateral financial institutions. We therefore urge that their implementation be accelerated, particularly in the areas of financing for infrastructural development, agriculture and capacity-building in the public sector. We should also move quickly to restructure the partnership between the donor community and recipient countries to allow for greater flexibility in the utilization of development assistance and better recognition of the development priorities set by our countries.

Efforts should also be made by the six out of 22 donor countries that have not pledged to achieve the 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance, since their GNPs add up to roughly half of the global total.

Within our limited capacity, we have made considerable efforts to create a conducive environment for achieving the MDGS through the strengthening of democratic institutions, including the judicial system and public accountability mechanisms, principally the anticorruption commission. We have also decentralized Government to allow local communities to have greater say in the way they are governed and to be able to hold public officials accountable. We are restructuring our public financial management system to enhance transparency in the use of public funds. We have established an independent public procurement authority and introduced regular public expenditure tracking systems.

We have also developed a poverty-reduction strategy paper and adopted a national plan for meeting the MDGS. These actions are complemented by a far-reaching restructuring of our security institutions, namely the police and the armed forces, in order to enhance their operational effectiveness in defending the security of our country and to strengthen their respect for human rights.

With the assistance and cooperation of UNAMSIL and the International Military Advisory and Training Team, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces have assumed their full constitutional responsibility for the security of the State. We have also made special efforts to consolidate the peace by promoting national cohesion and by addressing the special needs of war victims, including through the payment of reparations as provided for by the Lomé Peace Agreement. In this connection, we would appreciate contributions from the international community towards the operationalization of a trust fund to be set up for that purpose.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the draft outcome document provides a basis for recommendations to reform the Organization. We welcome the agreements reached on several elements of the reform process, including the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and a Human Rights Council, as well as the conclusion of an international instrument against terrorism. We also welcome progress in the negotiations in the areas of Secretariat and management reform, impunity, peacekeeping and agreement to support the development of capacity-building programmes within the African Union over a period of 10 years.

We urge that effective measures be taken to implement decisions that have already been agreed, so that we can build a foundation for rapid progress towards reaching agreement on the outstanding issues. It is important to quickly resume negotiations on such outstanding issues as the reform of the Security Council and related institutions of the United Nations, in order to take full advantage of understandings already reached in other areas.

Speaking from this rostrum at the Millennium Summit five years ago, I, like other leaders, referred to the imperative of adaptation. We urged the United Nations to continue to adapt and equip itself to deal with the perennial problems of human insecurity and underdevelopment and, in particular, the new manifestations of those problems, namely, terrorism and extreme poverty. Five years on, rather than subsiding, those problems seem to have escalated, posing serious threats to international peace and security. We must therefore strengthen our resolve to adopt effective measures to eradicate those problems. A reinvigorated United Nations can play a crucial role in this endeavour.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda.

President Museveni: I am not able to read out my entire statement, as it is long; I will just summarize it.

Regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), I would like to make three points. First, they are good minimum targets for the human race. Secondly, Uganda will not only achieve those Goals, but will surpass them — a factor highlighted by our achievement of a human development index (HDI) rating of 0.508, terrorism in northern Uganda and other forms of interference notwithstanding. Thirdly, I suggest better prioritization in our strategy to achieve these goals.

First, these are, obviously, good minimum development and social goals. Following the Second World War and the emergence of the welfare State in Western countries, societies in North America, Western Europe and Japan attained and surpassed goals comparable to the Millennium Development Goals. Some of the formerly colonized Asian countries have done likewise. The challenge is to spread such achievements to the rest of the world. Hence the decisions of the 2000 Millennium Summit.

Secondly, Uganda will achieve those Goals. Our target of poverty eradication is not 28 per cent by 2015, but 10 per cent by 2017. In spite of the vicious terrorism campaign orchestrated against us by some of our neighbours for much of the 1990s, as well as the mistake of underspending on defence at one stage, Uganda's HDI value is now 0.508, and we have entered the medium-performing group of countries, having graduated from the low-performing group.

We have performed beyond the targets set in the following areas: the provision of safe drinking water; primary school enrolment; HIV/AIDS; and reducing poverty levels. Our performance in infant mortality and maternal mortality has not been so good.

The Bible, in Matthew 6:33, says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and ... all these things shall be added unto you". My recommendation is that we first seek human resource development, that is, education and health for all; add value to the raw materials of Africa and the other backwater countries, which have been stolen for centuries; and expand trade-related infrastructure and increase market access to internal, regional and international markets. And then the rest will be added unto us. In other words, we need to empower each country, at the earliest opportunity, in order to be able to endogenously generate resources that will fuel the sustainable implementation of the MDGs in each country.

How will external aid sustainably fuel this implementation, given the complications and possible distortions that are concomitant with aid relationships? Aid-led vision has never worked. Vision-led aid can work; but such aid is not always available. Mr. McNamara, the former President of the World Bank, recently told me how glad he was that the South Koreans ignored his advice in the 1960s. He had opposed their plans to build an integrated steel industry.

In Uganda, most of our successes have been attained in the face of opposition, indifference or distracting, superficial heckling by quite a number of our external partners. I do not have time to go into all the details, but they can be read in my written statement. My question is, how can we sustainably implement the MDGs by depending on aid alone? The future of Uganda and the future of Africa is our responsibility; it cannot be the responsibility of the donors — I do not like this emphasis on donors, as if they are the ones who own our countries. We are the ones who own those countries, and we are the ones to develop them primarily, with assistance from other people.

The 2005 *Human Development Report* states, on page 117,

> "Sub-Saharan Africa graphically demonstrates how losses from trade can outweigh the benefits associated with aid and debt relief. If Africa enjoyed the same share of the world exports today as it did in 1980, its exports today would be some $119 billion higher (in constant 2000 dollars). That is equivalent to about five times aid flows and budget savings from debt service relief provided by high-income countries in 2002."

Thus, the money we are getting from aid is much, much less than we would earn from the removal of trade distortions.

I have two final points. My first point is in the form of a question to the General Assembly, and it is

included in my statement. How can the MDGs be met if we do not solve the problem of employment, of job creation? Will aid alone solve this problem? If we look at the structure of employment comparing the United Kingdom and Uganda, the picture is as follows. In the United Kingdom, the people who work in agriculture are only 1.5 per cent of the working population. In Uganda, that figure is 82 per cent. The number employed in industry in the United Kingdom is 19.1 per cent versus 5 per cent in Uganda. Services, in the case of the United Kingdom, weigh in at 79 per cent; in the case of Uganda, that figure is 13 per cent. This is the crux of the problem — a backward society. Can we maintain a backward society and, at the same time, achieve these MDGs, even if the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development give aid up to the level of 0.7 per cent, as required?

Here, I would mention that my statement is available in written form, and I would like delegates to read all of it. It is 12 pages long; I could not read it out within the five-minute iimit.

In conclusion: seek ye first Human Resource Development — that is to say, education and health for all — value added — that is to say, industrializing our countries — expanded trade-related infrastructure — and the rest shall be added unto you.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Joseph Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

President Urusemal: We gather this year against the backdrop of many recent natural disasters. The despair caused by these natural disasters and their apocalyptic nature has shocked us all. Please allow me to offer, on behalf of my Government and people, our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to the Government and people of the United States and to other Governments whose people have been devastated by the ravages and furies of these natural calamities.

The recent spate of devastation caused by these natural disasters brings into sharper focus the extreme vulnerability of low-lying coastal areas and small island developing States. It further highlights the daunting challenges posed by extreme weather on our ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to pursue sustainable development.

No amount of engineering advances can fully defend and save our small island developing States and low-lying coastal areas from the perils of the surging waters and rising tides of the sea, caused by the adverse impact of climate change. The stronger and more frequent hurricanes and typhoons in the Caribbean and the Pacific yet again prove this fact.

I am convinced, however, that if all nations, developed and developing, in this Assembly approach the critical problem of climate change and global warming in a concerted effort, what no engineering feat can arrest will and can be mitigated by renewed political will and commitment to carry out our obligations pursuant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and other relevant international agreements. We, therefore, appeal to those countries that have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so without delay.

Our global world demands concerted global action to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. My delegation has strongly supported the call to initiate negotiations to develop a more inclusive international framework for climate change beyond 2012. To be effective and of any relevance, the framework must include all major emitters, both developed and developing countries. In this vein, let us approach the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities, not as a licence to pollute but as a mandate to preserve Mother Earth.

Five years ago we committed ourselves to the Millennium Declaration. The MDGs remain relevant as the basis of our sustainable development. Unfortunately, it is the experience of my country, and our general observation in Micronesia, that we face an uphill battle in meeting and implementing these Goals. It is widely recognized that Oceania remains one of the identified regions of the world that is worst off in meeting its Millennium Development Goals. Even with this recognition, we find more often than not that the international community has not followed up with fair and proportionate allocation of resources to these more vulnerable small island developing States. For too long, our islands of the Pacific have been overlooked.

We, therefore, appeal to the United Nations and the international donor community to apply a fair and more proportionate allocation of development assistance to our region if we are to achieve these goals.

We are very encouraged by the commitments made by many developed members of this Organization to meet the internationally agreed goals of 0.5 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance (ODA) by 2010 and 0.7 per cent by no later than 2015. As a beneficiary of this development assistance, Micronesia remains grateful for the support of our donor partners and the international donor community for the continued assistance extended to us. We support the call made by many in this Assembly to those countries that have not done so to make every effort to achieve the agreed goals of ODA.

While grateful for the assistance of the United Nations in our national development efforts, we recognize the need for further strengthening of cooperation and closer linkage between the United Nations and many of its Member States in the Pacific, such as my country. I refer here to the need to establish a physical presence of the United Nations system within our national borders. The United Nations system must be seen to be directly involved in our development process and our national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on a sustained and regular basis. Such presence can only contribute to better coordination, strengthening our capacity, a more effective use of resources and an effective delivery of assistance. It would demonstrate the United Nations system's commitment to its most vulnerable members.

In this era of advances in information and communication technology, my Government applauds the United Nations and the International Telecommunication Union for their commitment to ensuring that information and communication technologies are placed in the service of humankind in the ongoing noble task of economic development. For island countries like the Federated States of Micronesia, whose population is spread over a vast area of the Pacific Ocean, access to reliable and affordable information and communication technology is critical to our nation-building. It is for this reason that my Government strongly supports the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action as adopted during the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and looks forward to the convening of the second phase in Tunisia in November 2005.

Ever since the earliest days of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the people of Micronesia have placed their faith in the United Nations Charter. As we leave this critical High-level Plenary Meeting, that faith is refreshed and strengthened. I call upon all Member States to apply the outcome of this meeting in order to achieve real momentum towards enrichment of the lives of all people, especially the most needy among us.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati.

President Tong: It is indeed a pleasure for me to represent the people of Kiribati at this august gathering, to extend their greetings to all and to present their views on the agenda before us.

At the outset, allow me to thank our gracious host, the people and Government of the United States of America for their hospitality. Allow me also to congratulate our Co-Chairpersons for their effective leadership of this meeting, which I am confident, will be successful.

We gather here on the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, confronted with the daunting and ongoing challenge of making this world in which we all live better for us, our children and our children's children. The task before us is not an easy one. The decisions we must make here will affect the future of this Organization and the future of humanity.

We all agree that development, in particular sustainable development, is fundamental to the achievement of international peace and security. We also agree that the main responsibility for the achievement of sustainable development lies, in the first instance, with individual countries, but we also acknowledge the fact that developing countries, in particular small island developing States, cannot achieve this on their own.

A more effective and meaningful partnership is required in order to achieve sustainable development. The framework for these partnerships has been developed over the past sixty years and includes international initiatives, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, the Mauritius Strategy, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Monterrey Consensus.

Regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Plan, have also been or are in the process of being developed to encourage South-South cooperation. These initiatives will also benefit from these partnerships.

My Government is committed to fulfilling the development aspirations of our people. Our national policy objective is to achieve the equitable distribution of development benefits to all our people based on the principles of good governance.

We are committed to the Millennium Declaration and are on track in our national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These have been integrated and mainstreamed into our national development strategy formulated through a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder consultative process.

Implementation of our national development strategy is progressing positively. This is a result of a good partnership that has been forged between my Government, our development partners, civil society and the private sector. We recognize and value the inputs and involvement of all stakeholders in the development process.

We acknowledge the invaluable support our development partners have extended and call on them to assist in the implementation of the initiatives mentioned earlier, especially for the developing countries and the small island developing States.

We recall their commitment to increase their official development assistance to a level equivalent to 0.7 per cent of their gross national income. We applaud those countries that have voluntarily met these targets and call upon those which have yet to do so to exert more effort in this regard.

We firmly believe that we are able to achieve sustainable development and reduce reliance on international aid assistance. The abundant fisheries resources within our exclusive economic zone — currently being harvested exclusively by distant-water fishing nations — could provide the basis for this. We are encouraged by the ongoing negotiations for an economic partnership agreement with the European Union in the area of fisheries, because this provides an opportunity for a genuine partnership through investment in this sector.

We seek to maximize returns from our fisheries resources and to this end endorse the report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its sixth meeting. We welcome in particular the conclusions that: resource owners should participate in fisheries activities in order to achieve better economic returns and to enhance their role in resource management; distant-water fishing nations should negotiate access agreements with developing coastal States on a basis that is equitable and sustainable; and distant-water fishing nations should increase progressively the participation of coastal States in fisheries activities, including the processing of the catch within the territory of the resource owners, thereby creating employment and further contributing to the sustainable development of developing coastal States.

We note with deep regret and concern the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, causing thousands of deaths and extensive damage. We offer our deepest sympathies to those affected by this natural calamity and pray that they find peace and comfort during this difficult time.

This recent disaster is a stark reminder of the extreme vulnerability of all mankind, regardless of nationality, to the forces of nature. A vulnerability that is so many times magnified for low-lying small-island States like Kiribati. I would like to place on record today our invitation to this august gathering to undertake a risk assessment of the likelihood of similar disasters occurring in small-island States and to make a conscious decision on the most appropriate response.

We commend and are grateful for the efforts of those organizations and countries that are assisting us in our efforts to adapt to the short-term effects of climate change. But, given the small land masses of low-lying coral atolls, there is a limit to the extent to which their populations can adapt.

With regard to peace and security, we agree that the foundation for sustainable development is a peaceful, secure and stable environment.

We are committed to international efforts aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we have become a party to major international treaties on this subject.

The new global challenges posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime do not respect borders. We must not be complacent in our efforts to

collectively tackle those challenges. Kiribati is committed to the international fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. I am pleased that yesterday, I signed the thirteenth counter-terrorism convention and deposited with the Secretary-General our instruments of accession to four of the counter-terrorism conventions and major treaties on transnational organized crime. Soon, we will also be acceding to the remaining eight counter-terrorism conventions and depositing our instruments of accession with the appropriate depositaries.

We have also adopted legislation to implement all counter-terrorism conventions and major treaties on transnational organized crime. While this is an important step forward, the challenge of effectively enforcing and implementing the legislation still lies ahead. We will therefore continue to need assistance in those areas that are beyond our capacity.

With regard to strengthening the United Nations, Kiribati firmly supports comprehensive reform of the Organization to better align and equip it to respond effectively to the challenges of this ever-changing world. We also support the provision of sufficient resources to the Organization to enable it to fulfil its mandated role on the basis of equitability and differentiated responsibilities.

We reaffirm our commitment to the values and principles upon which the United Nations was founded. We recall Article 4 of the Charter, which invites "all other peace-loving states" to join this global Organization. To that end, we reiterate our call for the Organization to discard its exclusionary practices and embrace as equal partners all nations, such as Taiwan, that are able and willing to contribute to international collaborative efforts in the pursuit of global peace, security and development. For it is only when all nations are treated as equal partners in the international community that we can expect significant strides to be made in our collective efforts.

Concerning the Security Council, Kiribati supports the expansion of the permanent and non-permanent Council memberships to better reflect the realities of our world today. We strongly believe that Member States that are major contributors to United Nations programmes, especially those involving the maintenance of global peace and security, should be accorded permanent membership.

We note that a deadline has not been set for the finalization of negotiations on Security Council reform, and we urge that the same deadline for other components of reform — for example, the establishment of a Human Rights Council — be applied to Security Council reform to maintain the momentum of the process.

Our peoples demand that we, as world leaders, work individually and collectively to improve the world in which we live. That is an important responsibility we owe to the people we serve. To fulfil that responsibility, we need to work together and address the challenges we all recognize: challenges to development, challenges to security in its widest context and challenges to our working together as an international community.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Charles Gyude Bryant, Chairman of the National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia.

Mr. Bryant: The people of Liberia extend their profound thanks to the United Nations for its continued assistance in dealing with the challenges that our country has faced. Indeed, we are grateful to all who have stood by us, and continue to do so, to bring about the significant transformation we see in our country today. We wish to acknowledge the invaluable role being played by the United Nations Mission in Liberia and by the troop-contributing countries.

With the critical assistance of the United Nations and with commendable donor partnership, our Transitional Government has made definite gains in the execution of its mandate. The guns are silent, our disarmament and demobilization process has been a resounding success, rehabilitation and reintegration are ongoing, our people are returning to their communities, Government authority has been extended throughout the country and elections are on schedule for 11 October.

Although there is a shortfall in funding for the critical elements of reintegration and security sector reform, those processes are also ongoing. Let me emphasize that the net effect of successful reintegration and security sector reform in Liberia will be sustainable peace and stability not only for our country, but for the entire West Africa subregion.

There is an encouraging sense of renewed hope in the emergence of democratic and stable post-conflict countries in our region. However, the challenges of rebuilding communities and directing people — particularly our young people — away from deviant social behaviours remain daunting.

Sixty years ago, our country was among those that brought this institution into being. Since then, global priorities have changed. Millions of the world's people — particularly women and children — continue to live in life-threatening poverty and ignorance. More than 20,000 people die daily because of poverty and diseases; yet, many of those diseases are preventable and curable.

The Millennium Declaration and the Brussels Programme of Action offer realistic ways forward to effectively overcome such worldwide scourges as poverty, global warming, HIV/AIDS, malaria, cancer and other fatal diseases, particularly as they affect poorer Member States.

We believe that Member States must commit themselves now, more than ever before, to respect human rights and the dignity of all persons, irrespective of the size and global standing of their respective countries. This approach can help to minimize the polarization of international politics as we have known it, especially since in recent history, our world has witnessed the exploitation of the poor not only by rich nations, but also by rich individuals in poor countries in support of terrorism. That is why my Government fully supports the ongoing consultations for reform of the United Nations. We must however, ensure that the reform process is based on broad consultation and consensus involving all Member States.

The success of Liberia's transition process thus far demonstrates how much can be achieved by the international community through the United Nations. Let me seize this opportunity to once again thank the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, under whose inspired leadership the international community rallied to our cause. We will continue to count on the international community as we strive to peacefully attain the last component of our two-year mandate — the holding of free, fair and transparent elections — and thereafter undertake the overwhelming post-conflict reconstruction agenda that awaits the democratically elected Government in a conflict-free Liberia.

Programme of work

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I would like at this point to inform members of the programme of work for this closing meeting of the High-level Plenary Meeting. First, we will continue to hear statements by Member States, which will be followed by brief oral summaries of the work of the four round tables. Thereafter, the Assembly will take action on draft resolution A/60/L.1, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome". The Secretary-General will be present at the time of the adoption of the draft resolution. After that, the Assembly will continue with the remaining speakers. That will be followed by closing remarks by the Co-Chairpersons and the closure of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

For us to avoid working late in the evening, it is now very important that statements not exceed five minutes. I appeal to all to respect that time limit.

As members are aware, draft resolution A/60/L.1, which contains the draft 2005 world summit outcome, was distributed during the meeting this morning. In that connection, I would like to inform members that the draft resolution contains a few technical errors: in paragraphs 60 (a), 163 and 164 (c). The correct version of those paragraphs is now being distributed in the General Assembly Hall.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Emile Lahoud, President of the Lebanese Republic.

President Lahoud: I am honoured to represent my country at this extremely important meeting of world leaders to assess action on the commitments we made at the Millennium Summit five years ago, most notably on upholding the principles of human dignity, equality and justice and on the establishment of a just and permanent peace worldwide, and to review the steps taken and achieved in that regard.

Allow me to commend the Co-Chairpersons and thank them for their fine handling of the Meeting and their efforts to ensure the Meeting's success. I would like also to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for all his endeavours and, most notably, for his valuable report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), which provides a precise

diagnosis of our world's challenges and problems and a blueprint for a new era of cooperation in tackling them.

Security challenges to our world stand out as particularly imminent. The global reach of terror makes it imperative for us to look carefully at the main roots of that plague and not be satisfied with merely fighting its symptoms. A politically secure world community can be achieved only through a multilateral world order based on respect for the rule of international law, human rights and the non-discretionary implementation of the resolutions of world legitimacy.

In that regard, the Middle East region, to which Lebanon belongs, remains a prime example of a region suffering from the endemic failure to implement resolutions of world legitimacy.

That question leads us directly to the debate surrounding the need for and the importance of an immediate and radical overhaul of the United Nations. In that regard, Lebanon welcomes the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, as proposed by the Secretary-General, and hopes to see the adoption of his proposals for the Security Council to properly weigh considerations grounded in principle when contemplating the use of force.

The Security Council must be reformed to make it more inclusive and more representative of the current make-up of the United Nations. Needless to say, Lebanon attaches a great deal of importance to this matter; that emanates from its great appreciation of the roles of the United Nations and the Security Council and from its respect for their resolutions.

I would like to stress here that Lebanon will continue to look to the United Nations and the international community to support our people's aspirations and our Government's broad and bold programme of reforms. Their interest in my country exemplifies the world's support of freedom in its broader sense and gives precedence to the language of moderation.

In Lebanon, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals, we have established two institutions: the Fund for Social and Economic Development and the Project for Domestic Development. In that regard, in cooperation with the United Nations, in 2003 the Government of Lebanon released its first report on the Millennium Development Goals and will publish a follow-up report in 2007. The report noted great progress in the fight against poverty, the great efforts made in making primary education accessible to all, greater gender equality and a dramatic decrease in infant and maternal mortality.

Lebanon supports the French proposal for the participation of the International Civil Aviation Organization in support of developmental programmes in poor countries. That would surely lead to greater justice and stability worldwide.

Lebanon's message to the Assembly is that of a small country that has endured wars, occupation and conspiracies for more than three decades. We stress the responsibility of all nations and peoples to safeguard peace, preserve security and further world justice.

The will for change derives from respect for human values, no matter how hard the path looks. It is our collective responsibility to achieve such change. It is well within our grasp to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of the Maldives.

President Abdul Gayoom: Let me begin by congratulating the Co-Chairpersons on their election to jointly preside over this important summit.

I also commend the Secretary-General for his inspiring report.

Before I proceed further, I extend sincere condolences to the American people and Government following the tragic deaths and massive destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. Despite the smallness of our country and its severe economic difficulties, I am happy that we were able to make a modest contribution to the efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the hurricane.

Time, indeed, is precious. Therefore, I shall not spend the time allotted to me speaking at length. I would rather dial 999, for my people are today facing an unprecedented crisis.

Five years ago, I left this Hall not only sharing the euphoria over the Millennium Declaration, but also with the confidence that the Maldives could and would achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As our

2005 country report would show, the Maldives has already achieved the Goals of halving poverty and achieving universal primary education. We are also on track to achieve the targets of reducing child mortality, attaining greater gender equality and improving maternal health.

But today I speak with a heavy heart, grieving over the losses my people have suffered as a result of the devastating tsunami of last December. The Maldives is the only country to have faced a nationwide disaster from the tsunami. Our economic asset losses are estimated at a staggering 62 per cent of our gross domestic product. Tourism, which has been the engine of our national economic growth for the past three decades, has suffered a sharp decline. Livelihoods destroyed by the tsunami have not been restored. Surging oil prices are draining our foreign exchange revenues. And, for the first time ever, the Maldives is in need of significant budgetary support.

Clearly, if that alarming trend continues, our ability to catch up with the Millennium Development Goals will continue to slip. We are indeed grateful to all those who assisted us in the relief phase following the tsunami. Many continue to help us with the recovery, and we thank them all. Much as we believe that development is our responsibility, our means of self-reliance are woefully insufficient.

In forums that have discussed the economic future of the Maldives, we have signalled the critical importance of the decade ahead of us. One need only look at the demographic challenge facing the country. Over the past 40 years, the population has tripled. Furthermore, we have a very young population. Although we have successfully brought the population growth rate down, the task is only half complete. We now need to ensure that every working-aged Maldivian finds gainful employment. Achieving the target of environmental sustainability is also a formidable challenge. The recent environmental tragedies around the world show yet again that we all have much to do to protect our global environment. Indeed, the decade ahead will make or break our vision 2020.

Despite the unprecedented setback caused by the tsunami, we are resolute in our quest of the Millennium Development Goals. Our view is that, even though a goal may become elusive, we should neither change the target nor abandon our vision. Rather, we should speed up our actions, as we have done in the pursuit of our national agenda for democratization, reform, good governance and human rights protection.

But for our people to enjoy the fruits of greater democracy, we need urgent international economic and financial assistance. At this critical time, a mere smooth transition period of graduation from the status of least developed country would not be adequate. It is imperative that our country's graduation be deferred until we return to pre-tsunami levels of development.

If a country of a mere 300,000 people cannot be saved from poverty, despair and ruin, the credibility of our hopes to save the entire world in 10 years will indeed be in serious doubt. Small States like the Maldives happen to be on the front line of most of the crises that afflict or threaten the world. From environmental degradation through international lawlessness to energy crises, it is the small States that are often the first victims. But the good news is that we, the small States, will also be among the first to know if the world has really found the will to act. I hope that, as I conclude my remarks, my urgent call will have gone through to 999.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi.

President Mutharika: I am pleased to be given this opportunity to make a contribution on the structure, challenges and implementation of and follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. But before doing so, I wish to underscore the fact that the rationale for the Goals is as valid today as it was some five years ago.

Let me start by stating that my country, Malawi, has made heroic efforts in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Our report, entitled "Malawi and the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and achievements" has been distributed. The report presents in a graphic form what we had planned to do in order to achieve the Goals; the challenges we are facing; our achievements despite the challenges; and the way forward.

As can be seen from the report, we in Malawi have taken the stand that, while the challenges are indeed enormous and while we need huge resources to succeed, we will still forge ahead to achieve whatever we can with our limited financial resources and capacity. I am pleased to state that we have made a

solid start and hope that the United Nations will recognize those efforts.

In our efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals during the past five years, we have learned a number of lessons that are essential in meeting the targets laid down in the Goals by the year 2015.

The first lesson is that the MDGs made assumptions that cannot be validated. For instance, the Goals were set on the assumption that the goods, services, food and income required to meet them were readily available and could be produced and sourced in the poor African countries, and that what we needed was merely to reorganize the distribution structures. That is not the case. The reality is that no goods and services are available, and hence our countries cannot meet the MDGs without first creating new wealth.

Above all, the United Nations ignored the need to establish new production structures in sub-Saharan Africa to supply the goods and services needed to meet the MDGs. In short, the MDGs were based on a supply of services that do not exist in the poor countries. That is the greatest challenge related to the MDGs.

The second MDG-related assumption is that institutional capacity is available in all of the poor countries. The United Nations appears to have underestimated the challenges that sub-Saharan African countries face in putting together a system of good governance that would have resulted in kick-starting macro-economic growth in the context of a stable political and economic environment. It also underestimated the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on the growth process.

The third assumption is that the United Nations underestimated the flight of capital and the erosion of growth due to external debt servicing. It also assumed that there would be a fair and equitable global trading system that would boost the exports of the poor countries. In other words, it ignored the reluctance by industrialized countries to conclude the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations, which would have given African countries greater access to the global markets for their products.

In other words, the poor countries cannot benefit from globalization if the industrialized countries are not cooperative.

Before concluding my remarks, let me underscore the fact that the Millennium Development Goals present a serious challenge to both developing and developed countries. We will therefore require greater cooperation among nations than ever before to achieve the Goals. We have no choice but to cooperate.

In conclusion, let me offer Malawi's deep condolences to President George Bush and to the Government and the people of the United States of America for the heavy loss of life and property due to Hurricane Katrina. Malawi is praying for the people of that great nation to overcome that great catastrophe.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Fiji Islands.

Mr. Qarase (Fiji): My country offers its congratulations to the presidency of the special plenary and extends its compliments to both Co-Chairpersons and to the Secretary-General.

May I, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Fiji Islands, extend to the President and the people of the United States our sincere sympathy with respect to the widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Our prayers and condolences go to those who lost their loved ones and their homes.

I commend Mr. Kofi Annan for his incisive report covering many aspects of United Nations and international affairs, including the Millennium Development Goals. It contains much that will take us further along the difficult road to development, freedom and peace on earth.

Fiji congratulates the Secretary-General for the initiative he has taken to begin the implementation plans to reform and strengthen the United Nations in the context of its various responsibilities.

What is now required, if we are to complete the journey, is an effort of our collective will. It requires sacrifices and compromises and a renewed commitment of support both to the United Nations and to one other. If this can be accomplished, we can achieve the United Nations mission to benefit humankind.

Let us ensure then that from here on the United Nations goes forward in a spirit of renewal and reform

that generates real hope, purpose and prosperity for the global family.

We must all help to create a United Nations that is more efficient and accountable. It must function always with integrity and urgent concern for the needs of the Member States. Above all, we must help the United Nations to concentrate, as never before, on reducing the shameful gap between developed and developing countries.

Fiji reaffirms its commitment to what the United Nations stands for. As always, we are for peace; that is why we have sent so many of our soldiers and police officers to serve with United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding forces. Many precious lives have been lost, but we have accepted that ultimate sacrifice as our contribution to the global effort for peace and security.

There should be no pause in United Nations endeavours to establish and maintain international peace, security and stability. This remains the primary role of the United Nations, and we support all measures to strengthen it.

Fiji acclaims the proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission. We will gladly share with such a Commission our own experience of reconstructing our country following the civil unrest which almost tore the country apart in 2000. With God's help, we quickly restored our economy and began the task of bringing our diverse communities together. The ongoing challenge for our country is to strengthen the foundation for unity and harmony.

In adopting many measures and initiatives to create a culture of peace, we have attached the utmost importance to reconciliation and forgiveness. Now we seek to take this forward by introducing, through legislation, the concept of restorative justice.

Fiji is fully dedicated to a Security Council membership which reflects current geopolitical realities. We support the inclusion of India and Japan to join with the United States and China as permanent representatives from the Pacific and Asia region.

We look forward to the moment when peace finally reigns in the Middle East, and we commend all of those countries that are helping to promote that global cause.

With respect to our Pacific Ocean region, it is our fervent hope that the Korean people as a whole will find lasting harmony. On the future of Taiwan, Fiji recognizes that this is a domestic issue and encourages and supports its resolution through dialogue and mutual agreement.

This age of globalization is marked by the adoption of universal principles governing such matters as democracy, human rights and trade and development. Today, I reaffirm here that Fiji accepts those precepts; there is no question about that. But we also say that countries like ours, which is undergoing a profound transition, should not be held to unrealistic standards. We need time to evolve and to adapt. We need time for adherence. Do not judge us by what might be inappropriate at our stage of development. Measure us by the progress we are making towards the universal ideals and the level of our commitment to change.

Fiji fully respects the principle of equal human rights. We endorse the proposal for a Human Rights Council that would be directly accountable to the General Assembly.

For our country, it is vitally important, as a factor for long-term stability, always to maintain a careful balance between the rights of individuals and those of communities. The special interests of the indigenous people, including their right of ownership to their natural resources, must also be protected. We therefore strongly endorse the proposal to bring before the Assembly a final draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. It has particular relevance for a multicultural country such as ours.

In accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, we are pursuing many policies to improve the quality of life of our citizens. For Fiji and other vulnerable States, there is one overriding issue that is critically vital to our economic survival: market access and remunerative prices for our exports. What meaning do the Millennium Goals have if developing countries cannot gain access to markets or a fair return on their exports?

There must be real recognition of the economic disparities and the conditions of inequality that make a mockery of the very idea of free trade. The removal of the certainty of access through the termination of quotas and reductions in assured commodity prices, without accompanying financial assistance or trade support measures, pose a serious threat to our economic growth and sustainability. Unrealistic and

inequitable world trade policies simply make it that much harder for our countries to eliminate poverty.

I therefore commend those developed States that are prepared to support developing nations and assist them in cushioning the impact of World Trade Organization compliance. I pay particular tribute to the European Union for its willingness to provide that type of assistance to its developing partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. We call on our European Union (EU) partners to provide adequate long-term support as the EU begins to reduce preferential access for sugar from African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

I also express our appreciation to our close neighbours Australia and New Zealand for their support in helping us gain better access to their markets and their important areas of development assistance.

The Millennium Development Goals can be met, but only if the United Nations commits itself to trade reforms that reflect a realistic appreciation of the plight of all developing countries, including vulnerable island nations.

May we find the strength and the conviction to do what is right.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Amadou Hama, Prime Minster of the Republic of the Niger.

Mr. Hama (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Niger and the delegation accompanying me, to associate myself with the heartfelt congratulations extended to the Co-Chairpersons, on their election to preside over our work. Knowing their personal qualities, I remain convinced that under their enlightened leadership the outcome of our discussions will meet our expectations.

The people of the Niger, facing an acute food crisis following a farming season marked by severe food shortages and locust invasions, expresses its full gratitude to the agencies of the United Nations system and to the entire international community for the efforts made to help our country in such difficult circumstances.

We express our complete gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who visited our country to provide his support to the people of the Niger. The situation, far from being merely the result of present circumstances, clearly reveals the extreme fragility of our system of production and, furthermore, the precariousness of the situation and the living conditions of the people of the Niger. In short, it explains my country's shortcomings in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In the light of the Niger's experience this year, five years after our solemn Declaration of 2000, today it has to be acknowledged with great bitterness that many countries, including mine, remain very far from achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For many of those countries, the situation has even deteriorated greatly. Poverty has worsened, becoming the scourge of modern times. The economies of many developing countries have declined, making them victims of the inequality of the international trading system, the steady decline in official development assistance, their excessive foreign debt burden and low levels of investment. Globalization has become one more painful ordeal for countries such as the Niger, which, despite its real economic potential, is condemned to living in the most abject poverty, and its people are condemned to live in despair and all manner of frustration. In such a situation, how can a country such as mine achieve the Millennium Development Goals?

In spite of the structural constraints on the economy of the Niger, since 2001 the Government has been firmly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It has worked to strengthen its cooperation with international financial institutions and has undertaken to draft and implement our poverty-reduction strategy and the special programme of the President of the Republic, Mr. Tandja Mamadou. Following the actions taken in that framework, meaningful progress has been made in the areas of democracy, basic freedoms, governance, access to basic social services and economic reforms. Furthermore, the results obtained so far demonstrate that my country has not been idle and that, despite its scarce resources and constraints of all kinds, it is striving to end the vicious circle of poverty.

It is normal to expect that well-managed countries, those that have carried out good economic reforms and created conditions that promote democracy and good governance, would show the best economic and social performance. Furthermore, in the opinions of the International Monetary Fund, the World

Bank, the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and many other bilateral and multilateral development partners, the Niger is well-managed. Thus, we are faced with a paradox that throws up a challenge to both rich and poor countries. Simply put, freedom, good governance and good macroeconomic policies in themselves are not enough to escape the poverty trap.

I believe we need considerable, ongoing contributions of outside resources to finance more ambitious investments in infrastructure and the productive sectors, which create jobs for young people.

I would like to speak about additional resources beyond the contribution of debt cancellation pledged by the Group of Eight, which we welcome. Such additional resources are increasingly difficult to find, in a situation where the Bretton Woods institutions, while reducing the debt burden of the Niger, require our country not to contract new loans for investment unless 60 per cent of such financing consists of grants. That condition is simply unrealistic. It is simply not feasible. Really, it is tantamount to making development financing for our countries dependent on grants.

Are grants in themselves sufficient for the economic development of a country? Definitely not. For proof, we need only turn to the Millennium Project report, in which the financing requirements of a country such as mine in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals are estimated at $900 million per year. At present, we receive only $120 million in combined loans and grants. Worse, the amount of official development assistance we receive is declining annually. Today it stands at barely half its level of 15 years ago. The Niger receives just $20 per inhabitant per year, which equals $1.60 per person per month.

Progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals by the target dates set is a matter of shared responsibility. The rich countries need to be convinced that the fight against poverty is closely linked to the burning questions of the moment, in particular to the genuine concerns of security and immigration.

What we need then is a big push — that is, massive resources capable of profoundly transforming the structure of our economies in order to create a productive, diversified base that could better integrate our countries into international trade and provide work for unemployed young people who, in the years to come, if nothing is done as of now, will explode like a bomb and wreak havoc in the world.

Consequently, the many pledges made here by the rich countries must be delivered upon very quickly if we want to genuinely achieve the MDGs and ensure social peace in our countries. For our part, shouldering our responsibility will mean working to strengthen democracy and good governance, peacebuilding and fighting against blind violence and terrorism.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Lineth Saborío, Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mrs. Saborío (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today, on the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, I am honoured to reaffirm Costa Rica's unconditional commitment to the principles and purposes of this Organization. We reaffirm our faith in the United Nations as the international community's main instrument to maintain peace.

We reiterate our full confidence in this Organization's capacity to fight for human rights and the well-being of all peoples. We renew our commitment to universal disarmament and to the efforts to promote sustainable development. For these reasons, we deem it indispensable for the United Nations to play a leading role in the creation of a better world.

In the area of international peace and security, we affirm our full confidence in the Security Council as the legitimate mechanism to confront the main threats to peaceful relations among nations. We reaffirm our commitment to Security Council reform with a view to making it more democratic, transparent and effective on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality among all States, rotation, periodic elections and accountability. We favour an increase in the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council with the right to be re-elected, and we support a deep reform of its working methods. In order to increase the Council's legitimacy and efficiency, we have advocated for the elimination of the right of veto in matters such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and massive violations of human rights. Regrettably, that initiative was not reflected in this summit's draft outcome document (A/60/L.1). We believe that the

question of limiting the right of veto should be reconsidered in the coming months.

Costa Rica firmly supports all efforts to strengthen the international human rights mechanisms. We endorse fully the idea of transforming the Commission on Human Rights into a Human Rights Council and would have liked the outcome document to contain concrete provisions on the mandate and structure of the new Human Rights Council. In their absence, we must devote the coming months to designing that new institution. Furthermore, we endorse the idea of increasing substantially the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and we welcome the initiatives to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms established by treaties with a view to creating, in due time, a unified system. In order to protect persons living with disabilities, we believe that it is necessary to conclude as soon as possible the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

We stress the importance of law and justice in international relations, and we reaffirm our faith in the International Court of Justice as the best mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We should like, therefore, to urge all nations to accept, without conditions, the jurisdiction of the Court. Similarly, we reaffirm our support for the work of the International Criminal Court as an indispensable instrument to prevent and punish crimes committed against humanity.

We regret that the draft outcome document does not mention either the International Criminal Court or the need to prevent impunity at the global level. We also regret the fact that the outcome document does not reaffirm commitments already made regarding disarmament, non-proliferation and small arms.

We are convinced that the United Nations must take the leading role in the fight against international terrorism. Therefore, we should like to reiterate the proposal made last year by His Excellency Mr. Abel Pacheco de la Espriella, President of Costa Rica, to create a High Commissioner against Terrorism, as an independent, professional and permanent body, located within the Secretariat, with a view to ensuring greater coordination and better use of the resources available at the global level for the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, we support the rapid conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism by the end of this year.

Regarding development, I wish to reiterate our call to fulfil the Millennium Goals. In particular, we urge the developed nations to honour their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to development assistance and to eliminate all barriers and subsidies that have a negative impact on the exports of developing countries.

Similarly, it is essential for us to always keep in mind the importance of ecologically sustainable development and, in particular, the need to protect our natural resources. In this context, I should like to highlight the initiative led by Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea of creating a "Rainforest Coalition" to protect all forests and ensure payment for the environmental services that they provide us.

Regarding management, and with a view to ensuring the unique legitimacy of this Organization, we consider it indispensable to strengthen the Organization's monitoring and oversight mechanisms, and we request the General Assembly to consider in depth the recommendations of the Volcker report. We believe it is necessary to face up with absolute transparency to the mismanagement cases and the allegations of corruption that have surfaced within the Organization in recent months.

Today we have been called upon to reaffirm our faith in this Organization and in its capacity to create the necessary conditions for human development, such as universal access to health services, education, social security, housing, safe water and job training. These topics must have the same priority in our Organization's agenda as the challenges of ensuring lasting peace and of eradicating terrorism.

At this point in the history of humankind, it is absolutely necessary to create the conditions for an inclusive, just and equitable global society. Such are the real prerequisites for attaining peace and security.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call now on His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

Mr. Meredov (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I should like to express sincere gratitude for the honour of addressing you from this rostrum and to convey, on behalf of the President of Turkmenistan,

Saparmurat Ataevich Niyazov, best wishes for peace and prosperity to the peoples of all nations.

This session has special value for Turkmenistan, which this year is celebrating the tenth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 50/80 A, on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan. President Niyazov had proposed that initiative at the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Turkmenistan values its universally recognized international legal status of permanent neutrality and demonstrates with practical actions its commitment to its international obligations in this regard and to the high ideals of the community of nations.

As the major international organization, and by virtue of its universality and vast political experience, the United Nations occupies a unique place in the system of international relations. It plays a major role in solving the most urgent problems of modern times.

The fundamental provisions of the United Nations Charter have now been further developed in the Millennium Declaration, which is based on the principles of sustainable development, strengthening peace and collective security, promotion of human rights and the rule of law. It is these principles that constitute a basis of our interaction for the future.

One of the Organization's main tasks is preventing threats to the world community. This in turn requires establishing a system of preventive measures and defining the legal tools and mechanisms for implementing them. Fully aware of the value of preventive action, Turkmenistan is engaged in practical approaches to promoting such action. In particular, Turkmenistan was the venue for the first round of the Forum on Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Development for Central Asia, which took place under United Nations auspices. We consider this to be an important process necessary for enhancing understanding and cooperation among States.

In our view, the attention that the United Nations devotes to issues of strengthening security and preventive activities in Central Asia is timely and necessary. In this connection, the idea of establishing the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, with its headquarters in our capital, Ashgabat, is a significant international initiative. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his intention to create the Centre, as set out in his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/60/1, para. 32). We are also grateful for the support of so many States for this important international initiative. The creation and functioning of the Regional Centre will promote comprehensive understanding and resolution of questions related to the prevention of conflict situations, combating terrorism and illegal drug trafficking and promoting sustainable development in Central Asia.

A key activity of the international community is the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. In this context, Turkmenistan, having supported the United Nations initiative to create an international coalition against terrorism, has become an active participant in it. Not only do we resolutely condemn acts of terrorism worldwide; we are also implementing specific legislative and practical measures to fight this scourge and prevent its spread.

Turkmenistan supports effective implementation of a comprehensive system of counter-terrorism measures, including active cooperation from States in finding and bringing to justice those who plan and perpetrate acts of terrorism. In this connection, we consider it timely and necessary that a comprehensive convention on international terrorism be completed and adopted.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a pressing issue being considered at the present High-level Plenary Meeting. As a party to the main international non-proliferation instruments, our country — whose neutral status involves such important obligations such as not to produce, deploy or proliferate weapons of mass destruction — fully supports the efforts of the international community in this area and participates in their implementation. One practical step is Turkmenistan's active participation under United Nations auspices in the process aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

One of the primary tasks facing the world community is fighting and preventing disease. In this area, Turkmenistan is closely cooperating with the United Nations and other international organizations in implementing its national health programme. As a result of such interaction, we have put in place a number of joint projects and programmes whose effectiveness has been recognized at the international level.

Another important theme of this Meeting is ensuring ecological sustainability. The solution of these tasks in Turkmenistan is addressing this issue

both nationally and through the implementation of international environmental programmes. Our close partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Caspian Ecological Programme, the Aral Sea Rescue Fund and a number of other international environmental initiatives shows how regional and global environmental protection issues can be tackled.

The human dimension has a special place in the Millennium Declaration. Here, Turkmenistan consistently undertakes efforts to create and develop genuine guarantees to ensure the rights of citizens. Our country is carrying out such activities together with international organizations, primarily United Nations humanitarian agencies. As a result of this kind of constructive partnership, we have established a dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights and are actively interacting with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; this has produced practical results. Specifically, just over a month ago, more than 16,000 refugees living in Turkmenistan were granted Turkmenistan citizenship or residence permits by decree of the President of Turkmenistan.

We shall continue our efforts on all these issues and stand ready to cooperate with all States and international organizations.

We share the widely held view that today the United Nations requires effective reform, but only if such reform strengthens the Organization and broadens its role in the world. We believe that one key area is strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the primary consultative and representative body of the United Nations. This, in turn, calls for improving the model for General Assembly activities, so that it reflects modern-day problems facing the world community.

A prominent aspect of reforming of the United Nations is improving the work and the structure of the Security Council. Given the significance of that body, we believe that the optimal composition must be adopted on the basis of broad agreement.

The initiative to create the Peacebuilding Commission and proposals to specifically define its activities as a United Nations institution along the lines of the Economic and Social Council are timely and significant.

In conclusion, I would like to note that only by pooling our common efforts and being aware of the role and responsibility of every country will we ensure successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and resolve the diverse tasks facing Member States.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. S. Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore.

Mr. Jayakumar (Singapore): This is not the best of times for the United Nations. The Organization is under attack — and from many directions. However, tension between the interests of nations and the idea of the international community is inherent in the very nature of the State system. Seldom in the 60 years of its existence has the United Nations been entirely free of crisis and controversy. Debate over the role of the United Nations and its future is a sign of its continued engagement with the issues of our day.

We may complain about the United Nations, yet we instinctively turn to it as we seek to organize life in an ever more interdependent world, confronted with such urgent new challenges as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, pandemic diseases and tsunamis. By and large, those controversies are over the extent to which and how best the United Nations should be involved. But that the United Nations should be involved is taken for granted.

The real problem is perhaps not that the United Nations is ignored, but that all too often we demand too much of the United Nations. The continuing validity of Charter principles does not absolve its Members of national responsibilities in an international system in which the State is still the central actor and State interests are the essential motor of international relations. The United Nations is only one diplomatic instrument in a repertoire.

At the same time, it is a fact that only the United Nations has a global mandate and near universal legitimacy. It is the only Organization equipped to facilitate cooperation between sovereign nation-States. Therein lies the crux of the issue. The United Nations Charter principles are vitally valid, but the Charter is not a sacred text because principles need to be operationalized to be relevant. United Nations reform is not something that should seize us only on anniversaries. It would be a mistake to consider the

sixtieth or indeed any other anniversary as a make-or-break occasion. Change and adaptation must be a continual part of the evolution of every living entity.

The key purpose of this year's gathering is to review the progress made since the Millennium Summit five years ago. Improving the lives of our peoples is the criterion by which history will judge us. It is from that perspective that I will offer my delegation's comments on three core areas contained in the outcome document: management, human rights and peacebuilding.

Management reforms directly pit the interests of Members against those of the Organization as a whole. They are difficult, but they cannot be avoided, as they are vital to restoring public confidence and support. The demands on the United Nations are always growing, but resources are finite. More effective use of available resources is therefore imperative if development and other goals are to be achieved.

The draft outcome document has set out a comprehensive set of proposals, and in that regard the proposals for an independent oversight advisory committee to assist the General Assembly and for an evaluation of the United Nations entire internal control and oversight system acquire special urgency under current circumstances.

On human rights, empowering our peoples with economic, social as well as political and civil rights must be both the end and the means of development. My delegation has an open mind on the proposal to transform the Commission on Human Rights into a human rights council, but the question is: Are the essential problems only structural? It is a fact that all but a handful of what are asserted to be rights are essentially contested concepts. The basic function of the United Nations is to enforce agreed norms as well as to expand the consensus on what constitutes agreed norms. But the penchant of some States to present their views as universal norms inevitably provokes resistance, unnecessarily politicizes the process and is ultimately unhelpful to the cause of human rights. Unless that deeper issue is adequately addressed, any change will be only superficial.

On peacebuilding, stability and the ability to govern are fundamental prerequisites for development. Bitter experience has shown us that instability in one State can have a powerful contagion effect far beyond its borders. The manner in which internal developments in one State have wider ramifications is only one illustration of how narrow notions of sovereignty no longer hold today. We believe that the proposal to create a peacebuilding commission is worthy of support, but given the complexities and sensitivities inherent in its proposed functions, we must be flexible in our approach and envisage changes in structure and functions over time and in different circumstances. In so doing, we must acknowledge that the concept of absolute sovereignty will not always be a viable operating principle. For that reason, establishing a peacebuilding commission will be a contentious enterprise, but that should not deter us from pursuing a worthy goal.

In the run-up to this sixtieth anniversary summit, expansion of the Security Council has dominated discussions on United Nations reform. That is to be expected, as the Security Council lies at the heart of the United Nations system. Because of the huge stakes, national positions have become sharply polarized. Singapore continues to believe that there should be an expansion of the Security Council to better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. However, our view is that the new permanent members should not have the veto, because that would make it even more difficult for the Security Council to be an effective instrument of world peace.

Let us continue to explore compromises on the reform of the Security Council and other issues that are before us. We should not, because of our inability to make progress on any one particular issue, lose interest in the other issues that are no less important. Where there is consensus, let us take big strides. Where the issues are still contentious, let us be prepared to take smaller steps.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to deliver the statement of Mr. Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary.

In September 2000, we identified our common vision for the future of the United Nations and committed ourselves to undertaking certain responsibilities towards our peoples, our societies and the international community at large. We also

committed to shouldering our responsibility towards our Organization, which we established 60 years ago as a forum to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and justice and to maintain international peace and security.

Today, and while the world has witnessed significant events over the past five years, we gather once again in New York to consider which of those basic commitments we have managed to fulfil and to agree on the way forward towards achieving the other objectives that we have failed to fulfil. We should carry out our examination of the future with a common understanding of the nature of the threats and challenges we are facing, and on the basis of our conviction in the uniformity of our purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, which has been and will remain the solid foundation upon which we will stand and confront the threats and challenges facing the international community.

Before we address our ambitious plans to reform our Organization, we must first agree on a number of premises and basics to secure our path towards the realization of our common objectives.

First, what brings us together must not be the urge to impose our personal will, lifestyle and values. We must come together around the desire for mutual understanding and joint endeavour to identify and address the common risks facing humanity.

Secondly, we should view efforts to achieve economic development as a human commitment to which we must all subscribe, not as a means of exerting pressure to achieve non-development objectives.

Thirdly, any successful effort to achieve comprehensive development will remain hostage to our ability to achieve peace and stability and to consolidate the principles of international legitimacy, justice and equality. We must reject the concept of the use of force and forced occupation of the lands of others. We must resolve international conflicts through peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of international law and legitimacy.

In 2000, we made a commitment to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. Egypt has taken significant steps in that direction on the basis of plurality and increased participation in the decision-making process — efforts that culminated in the holding of open presidential elections a few days ago, in which the candidates from 10 political parties competed, for the first time in Egypt's history, to win the confidence of the people.

We continue to support the structural reform of the human rights machinery and the establishment of the Human Rights Council. We stress that such reform should be substantive and not merely a change of names. We should also avoid politicizing such processes and engaging in double standards. We should reach common understandings that take into account cultural, educational and social diversity. And we should avoid using the proposed Human Rights Council to achieve political ends.

Egypt has also consistently called for the reform of the Security Council with view to adapting it to the needs of our changing world.

If the reform effort is to achieve its objectives, Egypt believes that it should be based on a number of principles, which I will briefly outline. First, we must restore the former balance between the main organs of the United Nations and return to the General Assembly its central role as the main legislative body, as enshrined in the Charter.

Secondly, we must reform the working methods of the Security Council to make it more transparent and credible. We should also increase the membership of the Council to make it more representative of the developing countries, particularly the African countries, which have not yet received their fair share of representation in the Council.

Thirdly, we must allow the Economic and Social Council to play a greater role in drawing up international policies in the economic and social areas and following up on their implementation. This would complement international efforts in the development process and help developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Fourthly, we believe that the Peacebuilding Commission will prove to be an efficient tool for building the national capacities of countries emerging from armed conflict and for assisting those countries on the path towards stability and reconstruction, without imposing trusteeship on them or undermining their national sovereignty.

All international efforts, including institutional reform within our Organization, must take place in parallel with efforts to combat terrorism. Egypt calls once again for a collective international effort, through the General Assembly, to deal with that scourge, which, if unchecked, will undermine all attempts by the international community to enhance international peace and security and to achieve development. The international community has yet to come up with a strategy in this regard, although it is crystal clear that no State, however powerful, can deal with the phenomenon alone.

We hope that our agreement, as reflected in the summit outcome document, will represent a new beginning for our common endeavours. We must ensure the implementation of that agreement so as to fulfil the common aspirations of our peoples for a better and more prosperous future through a new order based on cooperation, complementarity and international democracy — one that guarantees their rights and requires them to fulfil their obligations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency Mr. Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.

Mr. Win (Myanmar): I should like at the outset to convey the deepest sympathy of my delegation to those affected by Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf coast of the United States of America.

I should like, at this largest-ever assembly of world leaders, to congratulate Mr. Eliasson on his election to his high office.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders pledged that the world in 2015 would be better than the one that we lived in at that time. They made solemn commitments to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to guarantee peace and security through disarmament; alleviate poverty through development; and protect the environment and promote human rights, democracy and good governance through the establishment of agreed international norms. Progress in achieving the MDGs is far from what was originally envisaged. We should not despair, however, but must continue to endeavour to meet the agreed targets.

In the view of my country, priority areas include combating the scourge of terrorism and transnational crime; enhancing cooperation in meeting the challenges of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and those of nuclear disarmament; ensuring that development is sustainable and that the environment is protected; intensifying the international community's efforts to prevent, mitigate the effects of and eradicate communicable diseases, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic and avian flu.

In Myanmar, we are making satisfactory progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In our drive to eradicate poverty, we have achieved significant results through the designation of 24 special development zones in the states and divisions, with a view to achieving equitable and balanced development throughout the country.

In the area of ensuring education for all, according to our estimates, by 2015, net enrolment in primary level education will be 84.5 per cent. In the health sector, we have designated HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis as diseases of national concern. We are also actively participating in the international community's efforts to combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS through our membership in the Coordination Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Myanmar is endeavouring to achieve development, relying mainly on its own resources, without assistance, including from the international financial institutions. With external financial assistance, our development efforts could be accelerated.

If the world is to achieve economic development and social progress in a secure environment, then consolidated international efforts are urgently needed to solve global economic issues through implementation of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, by both developed and developing countries. The United Nations, as the only Organization with global reach and a global mandate, is the best entity to assist Member countries in those critical tasks. The United Nations must therefore be reformed so as to increase its efficiency and effectiveness and to strengthen its capacity to meet and overcome the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century.

The United Nations must be reformed, and its sacrosanct principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, non-interference in internal affairs, settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and the non-

use or threat of use of force should remain inviolate. Those guiding principles have withstood the test of time and are as relevant and valid today as on the day they were adopted.

We are confident that the Assembly will reaffirm the cardinal principles upheld and consolidated by the United Nations as the world body representing all nations on the basis of equality, solidarity, tolerance, cooperation and multilateralism.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Information and Culture, Personal Representative of the President of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me say at the outset that it gives me great pleasure to convey to the Assembly the congratulations of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, on the election of Mr. Eliasson, the representative of a friendly country, as President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I should like also to express our appreciation to the President of the Gabonese Republic for the efforts made by his country in guiding the work of the previous session of the General Assembly.

The United Arab Emirates expresses its appreciation for the efforts made by Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, to strengthen and promote the role of the United Nations.

On this occasion, I should like also to convey, on behalf of the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates, our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States of America and to the families of the victims of Hurricane Katrina for the tragic loss of life and property caused by the hurricane.

We consider this meeting a valuable opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Development Goals which we pledged in the Millennium Declaration, which represents a road map for international efforts to achieve prosperity and dignity for our peoples according to the principles of equality, justice and fairness. This meeting also provides an opportunity to develop a collective vision as to how to effectively address present challenges and the resulting new dimensions of collective security.

The United Arab Emirates reaffirms the central role of the United Nations and stresses the importance of its Charter — the main point of reference for building international relations on the basis of respect, freedom, equality, tolerance and joint responsibility. In that context, the United Arab Emirates would like to re-emphasize the importance of strengthening the United Nations and the reform of its principal organs to enable it to meet its growing responsibilities and to strengthen its role.

The benefits of the progress made in the economic, social and humanitarian fields have reached only a very small number of peoples. Indeed, a large percentage of the world's population continues to suffer from poverty, hunger, serious diseases, unemployment, illiteracy and displacement. They suffer also from the negative effects of armed conflict and foreign occupation, in addition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, and human rights violations, all of which pose grave threats to international peace and security, and impede sustainable development, which we are striving to realize.

The United Arab Emirates is firmly convinced that development is the most important issue of our time, since it represents the way to the elimination of poverty, hunger, and the achievement of security and stability for peoples. From that perspective, we emphasize the importance of addressing international challenges in the context of a clear vision of collective security based on the view that development and the welfare of the people are main concerns — a vision that can be translated into a global partnership that ensures the commitment of developed and developing countries to take practical and concrete steps to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of all United Nations summits and conferences.

Proceeding from that conviction, we believe also that the international efforts towards development will not bear fruit in the absence of international peace and security, the achievement of justice and equity for all peoples, the respect of cultural diversity and the right of people to self-determination; and the end of foreign occupation wherever it exists, including the occupation since 1961 by Iran of the three islands which belong to

the United Arab Emirates — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

There should be a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East issue and the Palestinian question. We must strengthen international efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to prevent the proliferation and production of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, we renew our commitment to the spirit and objectives of the Millennium Declaration, and we hope that this meeting will succeed in reaching a common vision as concerns ways to eliminate the obstacles impeding the full implementation of the Development Goals and will enables us to translate our undertakings and commitments into a tangible reality.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to His Highness Sayyid Haitham Bin Tariq Al-Said, Minister of National Heritage and Culture, Special Envoy of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman.

Sayyid Haitham Bin Tang Al-Said (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to convey to the Assembly greetings from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, and his best wishes for success in its endeavours to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

I sincerely hope that this high-level summit will be able to agree on implementable and practical collective recommendations on the financing of development and on the implementation of the programmes and strategies approved by United Nations conferences with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This summit has particular importance as it represents a historic opportunity to consider a number of questions that are key to continued international cooperation, in particular to the realization of the MDGs. There is no doubt that the achievement of comprehensive and sustainable development has been, and still is, the primary goal of all major meetings of world leaders.

We share the vision of the Secretary-General, who believes that there can be no security without development, and no development without security. Development and security are complementary, hence the importance of this summit, which rests on four principal pillars determined by the Millennium Summit. Those pillars are economic development; social development; conservation of natural resources; and protection of the environment.

Of course, these main themes overlap with other, no less important issues such as those of awareness-raising, education, institution-building and the integration of women and youth, in addition to training and information.

Although my Government agrees with the recommendations made by the Secretary-General on sustainable development, we would like to note here the importance of giving developing countries greater freedom to promote their development programmes according to their national priorities and the particular circumstances of each country, and in consonance with international development strategies. Because my country's Government wishes to make people the focus and purpose of development, it has placed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the forefront of its national policies, and is doing its best to connect the social and economic dimensions of the Goals through the use of monitoring indicators, which have shown that the Sultanate has already gone a long way towards attaining them and that, with God's help, it will manage to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on schedule.

At the international level, my country has been following with concern the situations of many peoples in many regions of the world, who have been working very hard to achieve a level of development that would enable them to overcome epidemics, poverty and the consequences of natural disasters. We believe that humanitarian responsibility dictates that developed countries should give others the opportunity to share in the fruits of the global economy. They should do that by reviewing their policies in order to cancel debts and offer all types of economic support, including permission for poor and developing countries to manufacture medicine and provide it at affordable prices to people suffering from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

In view of this, we believe that it is time for the international community to adopt concrete, practical steps to enable those countries and regions, especially in the African continent, to benefit from the opportunities of globalization in a true world partnership. That can never be achieved through promises, but through a clear implementable

international strategy based on debt cancellation, provision of development aid and unrestricted access to world markets for the exports of developing and least developed countries.

As for the situation in the Middle East, the latest developments relating to the Palestinian question, including the withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip, represent a first step in the right direction towards the application of resolutions establishing international legitimacy. We hope that Israel, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and neighbouring countries, will take similar steps towards withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian State.

We agree with the Secretary-General's contention that the absence of a comprehensive international agreement to combat terrorism, based on a clear definition of the phenomenon and a clear knowledge of its causes and roots, has weakened international efforts to combat it. We nevertheless believe that it is time to put into effect an international counter-terrorism strategy based on cooperation and exchange of information among countries and the need to distinguish between the legitimate right to self-defence and resist oppression and terrorist acts committed by outlaw individuals or groups that kill and terrorize civilians as both a means and an end.

There is no doubt that the United Nations and all its subsidiary bodies and relevant international institutions need development and modernization to enable them to better serve the interests of States and adapt to new international developments. Accordingly, the development and modernization process should go beyond the mere expansion or reduction of the membership of certain councils and committees. It should be based on a new concept that focuses on giving a strong new impetus to all those bodies and councils, to enable them to perform the functions entrusted to them in the service of security, stability and comprehensive development in the world.

As for the process of improving the performance of the United Nations, we should like to affirm that for that process to succeed, it must be continuous and comprehensive, without time frames or deadlines. Moreover, it should include all bodies of the United Nations, and take into consideration new developments on the international scene, in a manner that would help improve the performance of collective international action and provide a prompt response to the challenges faced by our contemporary world.

In view of all the foregoing, it has become essential to create the right balance between the functions and mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations, improve procedures, and reduce the items on the agendas of some of these organs to better reflect the current challenges facing the international community. Such measures should not impair the ability of those organs to deal with important substantive matters. The United Nations should play a decisive and central role in designing international economic policies. The role of the Economic and Social Council should not be limited to reviewing programmes approved by the United Nations. That Council must develop its dialogue and solidarity with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, especially in the field of world economic policymaking.

It would also be useful to coordinate efforts among international and regional organizations in the interests of complementarity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, delivered on his behalf by His Excellency Mr. Abdelwaheb Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia.

Mr. Abdallah (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to convey the sincere greetings of His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, and to deliver His Excellency's address to this United Nations High-level Meeting.

> "I am pleased to express my deep appreciation of the efforts made by all parties to ensure an excellent preparation for this United Nations High-level Meeting. I wish also to commend the role played by the Secretary-General Kofi Annan in providing the optimum conditions for its success.
>
> "Let me also convey to the Government of the United States and the friendly American people our condolences and sympathy with respect to the hurricane, express the solidarity of the Tunisian people with the bereaved families

and voice the hope that they may promptly overcome the challenges now facing them.

"This special meeting, which is part of the process of assessing progress in the implementation of the Millennium Summit Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly five years ago, assumes today a special significance, as peoples around the world expect it to live up to their aspirations for peace, security, development and prosperity.

"Tunisia helped to crystallize those noble objectives by presenting a number of proposals and initiatives. My country will continue to promote its effective role in developing methods of multilateral action based on its firm commitment to the United Nations Charter and the establishment of a world order based on the principles of solidarity, justice and equality.

"It gives us cause for pride that the results achieved in Tunisia on the path of reform, development and modernization over the past two decades are in line with the Development Goals set by the Millennium Summit, particularly in terms of reducing the rate of poverty, improving the Gross Domestic Product, spreading education throughout the country, strengthening gender equality, promoting reproductive health, and integrating the principles of sustainable development into national policies.

"Those results are the fruits of continued national efforts in the process of comprehensive reform based on the primacy of law, the anchoring of the mechanisms of good governance, and the establishment of a close correlation between democracy, the protection and development of human rights in all their dimensions as an indivisible whole, and the achievement of economic and social development.

"Tunisia remains convinced that achieving the Millennium Goals requires joint efforts by the international community — Governments and organizations alike — in order to further promote the values of solidarity in helping developing countries, particularly in the African continent, to implement their development programmes and plans and meet the challenges of modernity and progress.

"In that respect, we welcome the steps taken by a number of developed nations to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to the achievement of those Goals by 2015. We also hope that similar measures and initiatives will be taken to provide medium-income developing countries with the means and mechanisms necessary to increase their development efforts and bolster their economic and social programmes.

"Poverty, destitution, famine and other scourges confronting many regions of the world — particularly in Africa — require that, as a matter of urgency, we address their root causes comprehensively through a movement of solidarity involving the various components of the international community. In that context, we believe the time has come to provide the financial resources needed to enable the World Solidarity Fund to begin the work for which that United Nations mechanism was established — following its adoption by the General Assembly on the basis of a Tunisian proposal — to eradicate poverty, exclusion and marginalization, in accordance with the Millennium Summit policy guidelines.

"Our 1998 appeal for the convening of the World Summit on the Information Society reflected our resolve to establish a global knowledge society offering everyone equal opportunities for access to the benefits of scientific and technological progress, which would help to narrow the digital and developmental divide between developed and developing countries.

"Tunisia, which is working to provide the best possible conditions for the holding of the second phase of that important international event from 16 to 18 November 2005, looks forward to massive and high-level participation by Members present at this summit through representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector so as to ensure the success of its proceedings and the achievement of the objectives pursued, which are essentially in line with those set out in the Millennium Declaration.

"The changes occurring in the international sphere require that we all work to establish a sound framework for reforming the United

Nations system and restructuring its bodies in line with the requirements of the current phase, particularly with regard to expanding the Security Council and strengthening the role of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

"It is our hope that this Meeting will result in the adoption of consensual practical measures that will support development programmes throughout the world and strengthen the foundations of collective security — particularly by combating terrorism, tackling its root causes and reducing the number of weapons and the spread of weapons of mass destruction — in order to enshrine the pivotal role that the United Nations is called upon to play in all those vital areas and to enable the Organization to continue to work to implement the lofty goals for which it was founded 60 years ago.

"I am confident that the Gabonese and Swedish co-chairpersons of this important meeting will assist in the achievement of the desired goals and that recommendations will be issued that will consolidate the foundations of security, stability and sustainable development throughout the world."

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Raymond Ramazani Baya, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ramazani Baya (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express, on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my feelings of support and solidarity to the American people, who have been hit hard by a natural disaster. I welcome the movement of solidarity in the international community, in conjunction with the efforts of the American Government, to restore some hope and ease the suffering of the people affected by it.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for its part, is emerging from a long armed conflict considered to be the first "African world war" — a war that has deeply divided the country, shattered its economy and destroyed its basic infrastructure, its schools, its hospitals and its administration. For three years, the Government of National Unity has been striving to get the country working again, to complete its reunification by re-establishing transportation networks, rebuilding schools and hospitals, restoring State authority throughout the national territory, establishing a national republican army and, above all, preparing for the first general elections in more than 40 years.

Against that difficult background my country has incorporated the Millennium Development Goals into its anti-poverty strategy. But, despite that difficult context, the results are not negligible. Economic growth has been between 6 and 7 per cent for three years, the financial and legal framework has been tightened up, the national currency exchange rate has been stabilized, inflation has been brought under control, and peace and security have been restored in most of the national territory. Those are considerable achievements, given the realities of the recent past. Here, I should like to commend the essential role played by the international community in the upturn in my country's political and economic situation.

As we can see, the progress made by my country is real, even if its pace is still slow — too slow, given the acute needs and problems that exist. HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis ravage the most dynamic parts of the population. We must therefore redouble our efforts to provide everyone easier access to health care, education and employment.

The challenges that must be met to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are considerable. The resolve of the Congolese people and the involvement of their Government will not be enough; more resources will need to be allocated, as a matter of priority, to the fight against poverty.

That is why the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes, first, to reaffirm its faith in the Monterrey Consensus, which is a key factor in mobilizing the necessary financial resources for development. Secondly, we welcome the handling of the debt issue through the outright cancellation of the debt of 18 of the poorest countries. It is our desire and hope that that measure will be extended to other developing countries. Thirdly, we wish to congratulate the developed countries, particularly France, on the initiative to identify new financing sources — in particular, a levy on air tickets — and on the commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance by 2015.

Given the new threats overshadowing our planet, the Democratic Republic of the Congo believes it crucial that we reinforce the international peacebuilding and conflict prevention structures. We must combat terrorism in all its forms. We must also adopt clear principles governing the use of force and must strengthen the United Nations capacity in this field.

I wish to take this opportunity to once again thank the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the entire United Nations system, on behalf of the Congolese Government and President Joseph Kabila, who was unable to travel to New York. We convey to them our thanks for the tireless efforts made in order to resolve the crisis in the Great Lakes region.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo believes in the United Nations, and we hope that the ongoing reform process, a process that is relevant and necessary, will reflect all the changes that have taken place since the creation of the Organization in 1945.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency The Honourable Siosiua 'Utoikamanu, Minister of Finance of Tonga.

Mr. Siosiua 'Utoikamanu (Tonga): At the outset, I take this opportunity to express Tonga's deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the Government and people of the United States of America for the losses suffered in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast.

The historic Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 set a number of specific and time-bound Goals with the universal vision of the Member States for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, in which all human beings can live better and safer lives. We meet again here in New York to take stock of where we are, review our overall achievements, highlight the issues and constraints and appraise the options available to us as a collective group in order to bring us back on track and ensure that the specified targets that we, as a global community, set are met by 2015.

We need to be constantly reminded as to why the Goals are important, and Professor Sachs in his report on the Millennium Project aptly summarizes the manifold reasons as follows: for the international political system, they are the fulcrum on which development policy is based; for the billion plus people living in extreme poverty, they represent the means to a productive life; for everyone on Earth, they are the linchpin of the quest for a more secure and peaceful world.

What have we achieved over the last five years? At a global level, although considerable progress has been made in achieving many of the goals, progress has been disproportionate across regions and countries. Progress has also been disproportionate in relation to the Goals. At the same time, there have been many missed opportunities. The final score as we step on the scale is that we are found wanting. But all is not lost, because we once again have this unique opportunity to pull together and renew our commitments to truly make a difference.

As far as my own country, Tonga, is concerned, we have achieved targets such as universal primary education and gender equality through the provision of free primary school education for children of ages 5 to 14 years, as stipulated in our Constitution. Considerable improvements have also been achieved in secondary enrolment rates. Tonga's performance on the Human Development Index and the Human Poverty Index reflects a high level of expenditure in health and education, stagnant population growth and sustained high levels of investment in the social sector. The *Human Development Report 2005* ranked Tonga 54th among 177 countries. However, much still needs to be done in terms of further improvement in the quality and level of delivery of services, and this is currently being addressed by the Government through a comprehensive health and education sector-wide programme jointly financed by domestic resources, overseas development assistance (ODA) and loan funds. The majority of the population has access to safe water and sanitation facilities in both rural and urban areas.

One of the areas where Tonga needs to make more progress is in the participation of women in decision-making, both at the local and national levels. The current level of women's participation is largely attributed to cultural overtones, and there are significant efforts to educate and promote the greater involvement of women in the political arena.

Small island developing countries, including Tonga, face many unique challenges because of our small populations, remoteness and dispersed locations, narrow resource endowment and vulnerability to external shocks, including from international market

fluctuations and natural disasters. The development of regional and international alliances, such as the Pacific Plan, as well as the Mauritius Strategy adopted at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in January 2005, play a crucial role in addressing these unique challenges in an environment subject to rapidly changing forces.

The Pacific Plan promotes three main approaches to regionalism. The first of these is regional cooperation through intergovernmental dialogue and the sharing of experiences and lessons learned. Second is the regional provision of goods and services that can benefit from the pooling of national services at the regional level. Third of all is regional integration through the lowering of market and technical barriers between countries.

The continuing escalation in the price of oil and its consequent negative impact on our development efforts is of concern to us, and we therefore support accelerated efforts to research alternative sources of energy.

While we fully recognize that the national Governments should take responsibility for their development efforts, we are also cognizant of the fact that domestic financial resources on their own will not be sufficient to finance our respective countries' development programmes. The Monterrey Consensus fully recognized that for a number of countries, including small island developing States, overseas development assistance is still the largest source of external financing and is critical for the achievement of the Development Goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed development targets.

Tonga, therefore, welcomes the renewed commitment made by donor partners to meeting the target of 0.7 per cent ODA of their gross national income by 2015. We also welcome the United Nations declaration on innovative sources of financing for development that provides mechanisms to increase and supplement traditional sources of finance. However, we also recognize that ODA, while necessary, will not be sufficient and will have to be complemented by foreign direct investment, trade and development partnership.

Tonga supports the proposal for a comprehensive package of reforms to revitalize the General Assembly, as well as the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, in order to fulfil its mandate as envisaged by the Charter. We also support the ongoing work of the Secretary-General to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat.

On the issue of the reform of the Security Council, we support a Security Council that is more broadly representative of the international community as a whole and the geopolitical realities of today and the expansion of its membership to meet these goals. In this regard, Tonga maintains its support of Japan's proper and permanent place on any enhanced Council.

In conclusion, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is still a reality, but it can only be made possible if all the parties concerned fulfil their respective roles and obligations. Let us deliver on our promises and truly make a difference.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Rabbie Langanai Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Namaliu (Papua New Guinea): Mr. President, we congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We compliment Gabon and, in particular, The Honourable Jean Ping, whose tenure as President of the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly will be remembered as a fulcrum of critical change initiated at the United Nations.

Difficult as it has been, the draft outcome document provides something for everyone. We acknowledge that much more could have been included. However, in our view, there is sufficient detail in the document to allow for critical reform issues to be followed up and elaborated on, particularly during the sixtieth General Assembly.

We are extremely pleased that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which provide each of our countries with a set of focused benchmarks for addressing critical development issues, have been maintained in full.

We also strongly support the underlying principles of the Jakarta Declaration, to which His Excellency the President of Indonesia referred this morning. We therefore call upon the international community and the United Nations to respond to and support this important Declaration.

The challenge to the MDGs, in our view, is to nationalize and localize them in order to achieve the overall performance targets by 2015. While we endorse the importance of ensuring that those global targets are reached, we also strongly believe that we need to focus on the sustainability of the MDGs beyond 2015.

As a nation we have reviewed the MDGs and the methods to achieve them. In a recently completed joint report with the United Nations Development Programme, Papua New Guinea's scorecard indicated that much more needed to be done. A number of ways have been considered to implement the MDGs. The medium-term development strategy adopted by our Government this year is an attempt to provide a road map for implementation. The medium-term development strategy will tie the MDGs into the national development process and enable funding for their implementation through our national budgetary process.

As part of the development agenda, we also note with great satisfaction the inclusion of the Mauritius, Brussels and Almaty action plans. We call upon the international community to continue assisting all countries in meeting the aims elaborated in each of those plans and the associated declarations.

We strongly believe that the principles of development and security — being intertwined and inseparable — must continue to underpin the international peace and security paradigm. Needless to say, it is our collective global responsibility. Papua New Guinea has assisted and will continue to assist the global process by acceding to and continuing to comply with international treaties relating to terrorism and measures to combat that scourge as part of our responsibility and contribution to addressing this critical issue. However, we do note that issues relating to surveillance and other critical practical measures to combat terrorism need to be addressed along with their high operational costs.

Next month the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum will endorse a Pacific plan. Security along with economic growth, sustainable development and good governance will provide the four central pillars and priority areas for the region.

In recent times, multinational regional forces, both armed and unarmed, have been engaged in conflict and post-conflict operations. With strong logistical support from Australia and New Zealand, regional member countries have contributed troops and police to restore peace and order successfully on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands. In the case of Bougainville, we acknowledge and greatly appreciate the strong support from the United Nations, in particular from the Security Council, and from United Nations agencies.

Those two regional initiatives just mentioned give credence to the call for stronger regional cooperation to supplement national and global efforts to achieve peace and stability for the enhancement of economic prosperity.

My country became a 30-year-old democracy today, and the hopes and aspirations we had when we joined the United Nations 30 years ago as its one hundred and forty-second member still remain. We have had difficulties and successes. We have had success, for instance, in maintaining a continuous but challenging democratic political system along with its related institutions. As we have moved on as a democracy we have learned many lessons including this one: that the application of democratic principles, much like the development process, is not a one-size-fits-all process. While the ideals of democracy provide us with the best options for development, the imposition of the experiences of others is not necessarily conducive to it. Like other Member States, we are keen to work for and with the United Nations Democracy Fund.

Finally, we look forward to the adoption of the draft outcome document as it provides us with a good basis to move the United Nations reform agenda forward.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan.

Mr. Ismail (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express my country's heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the people and Government of the United States of America for the losses caused by Hurricane Katrina.

I wish to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons, on their election to preside over this historic and important meeting. I am fully confident that their wisdom and political and diplomatic expertise will guide us towards the desired results. I wish also to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Jean Ping for his

able conduct of the work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, which made all the preparations for this Meeting. I commend His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his commitment and persistence in leading this international Organization on the path of reform, modernization and advancement towards its noble goals and purposes.

The concerted and constructive efforts exerted by the international community and crowned by this historic Summit are most praiseworthy. This is a courageous initiative that demonstrates the awareness and responsiveness of the international community in assuming its responsibilities. At the same time, it reflects our sincere desire to work collectively and to confront steadfastly the challenges that lie ahead of us in building a new international order based on justice, equality and respect for human dignity and governed by the principles of international law.

This is a historic and unique opportunity for us to shoulder our responsibilities and face present threats squarely, strengthening the central role of the United Nations and enabling it to assume its function of effectively maintaining international peace and security. The Organization has been and should remain the common platform for collective responsibility, multilateralism, and a firm resolve to create a stable and secure world.

In that regard, this Summit represents a real test of the international community's will to effect the changes that all Member States of the Organization seek.

At the forefront of the priorities of this Summit is the issue of sustainable development and the liberation of billions of people from poverty, disease and hunger. In this respect, we are deeply concerned about the modest progress made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, which have allowed millions of people to hope for a world in which they can live in a minimum of human dignity.

The economic and social conditions in the least developed countries continue to deteriorate badly. Moreover, the number of least developed countries has increased since the Millennium Summit. That grave development should remind us that what we decide to do to help those countries during this summit will be the criterion for measuring the credibility of our commitment to development and poverty reduction. The least that we can do is to assist those countries to implement the Brussels Programme of Action on time.

It is necessary to formulate strategies and policies that address the concerns and needs of developing countries with respect to enhancing capacity-building and economic progress. Collective security will remain illusory until we fulfil the needs of developing countries. We cannot achieve a secure world while the African continent continues to suffer the burdens of debt, poverty, disease and the extreme inequality of the international economic and trading systems. To restore the global economic balance, it is essential to cancel all debts, fulfil official development assistance obligations and allow developing countries to take their place in the international trading system.

Deeply believing that terrorism is a threat to international stability and security, the Sudan reaffirms its condemnation of all forms and manifestations of terrorism and calls for the intensification of efforts to combat terrorism through concerted international efforts guided by the principles of international legitimacy. In that context, we support the call to hold an international conference to reach agreement on a definition of terrorism and to find ways and means of combating it. It is also important to distinguish terrorism from the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation.

We emphasize the need to respect the principles of international legitimacy in combating terrorism by preventing all unilateral measures and violations of international law.

In that context, we recall that since 1998, the Sudan has repeatedly called on the United Nations and the international community to take a just position conforming with the principles of justice and international law regarding the 1998 attack on the al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory on the pretext of combating terrorism. That attack negatively affected my country's development efforts and deprived my people of basic medicines. Today, we reiterate our call on the United Nations to take just and necessary measures in accordance with international law, and we appeal to the entire international community to support our just and legitimate demand.

The Sudan firmly believes that the idea of a clash of civilizations is a fallacy. We are all striving to build a humanitarian world whose peoples enjoy peace, security, stability and a peaceful coexistence. My

country therefore welcomes and supports the initiative of the Prime Minister of Spain calling for a dialogue among civilizations. The Sudan is committed to safeguarding the dignity of humankind and respect for its rights, guided by its values, heritage and beliefs. The problems arising in the field of human rights are a result of selectivity, double standards and the misappropriation of the issue of human rights for political ends. Thus, what is basically required is a reform of practices, not only of institutions.

Members have undoubtedly followed the developments of the Sudanese situation, which led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement now being assiduously implemented in both letter and spirit. In that connection, I express my sadness at the loss of Mr. John Garang, who was a genuine and strong partner in the achievement of that peace agreement. I express our deep appreciation to the international community for its support during the years of war, when it provided necessary humanitarian essentials and support for the peace efforts. We are confident that the international community will continue to accompany us along our path to peace and stability. The Oslo donors conference and its outcome are a great testimony to that support. The Sudan requires considerable resources for reconstruction, the rehabilitation of the displaced and refugees and the promotion and strengthening of peace.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to Mr. Mohamed Ould El Abed, Minister for Economic Affairs and Development of Mauritania.

Mr. El Abed (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour for me to take the floor before the Assembly. The President of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy and head of State, Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, has asked me to convey his regrets that he was unable to be here because of pressing engagements connected with the democratic transition in Mauritania and requested me to convey his best wishes for the success of the meeting.

Like many countries, Mauritania hoped to benefit from the winds of democracy that have blown across the world since the beginning of the 1990s. However, the attempt to achieve democracy was aborted after the caricatural implementation of the 1991 Constitution and the excessive personalization of power. A deep political crisis ensued, characterized by the stifling of public freedoms and the arrest of politicians, opinion leaders and intellectuals. Clandestine movements emerged, and a number of coups d'état were attempted. At the same time, economic reforms faltered, and poor management was rampant, contributing to the continued deterioration of the people's living conditions. The lack of political prospects, in particular the impossibility of changing the situation through elections, posed a serious threat to the country and its future, leading the armed forces and the national security forces to decide unanimously to take corrective measures on 3 August 2005 to halt the country's dangerous slide. That change, which was carried out peacefully, without bloodshed and without disturbing people's everyday lives, was greeted with great joy and tremendous popular support unprecedented in the history of our country.

A national consensus formed around the objectives of the corrective measures, as was witnessed by delegations from fraternal and friendly countries and the missions of regional and international organizations that visited our country recently. The objective of the measures was to create the conditions for the establishment of a genuine rule of law and a pluralist democracy, which alone can ensure respect for human rights and good, transparent management of public affairs. The restructuring was to be accomplished within two years, with the participation of all political, economic and social actors of the country. Those conditions are indispensable for the success of any development policy and for the effective and optimal use of official development assistance and of the national and international resources needed to finance development.

At this historic moment in our country's life, which coincides with the summit to review the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the means to finance them, we express our satisfaction with this meeting. We believe that developing countries have special challenges above and beyond national consensus on development and the need to establish policies based on equity, justice and equal opportunity. Those challenges cannot be met without the dynamic and effective solidarity and cooperation of the international community, especially the rich countries.

Mauritania welcomes the major important topics that were articulated in United Nations summits and meetings. In that regard, the Monterrey Consensus was the starting point of the partnership for development

between rich and poor countries. The objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to which we fully subscribe, are a point of reference for developmental strategies and for assessing progress.

Mauritania's achievement of the MDGs will require long and arduous efforts. Members of our Organization surely know of our political situation before 3 August 2005, which I have just described. That situation did not enable us to make significant progress towards implementation of the MDGs. On the contrary, the situation was not at all conducive to effective governance or to effective allocation of financial resources. The result of this was that public policies had a limited impact on reducing poverty.

A recent evaluation of the implementation of the MDGs in Mauritania has found that only a few targets can be implemented by 2015, while a number of others — and some of them very important ones, such as health and the environment, among others — cannot, unless major economic and political changes are made. The Government is mindful of this situation, and we have committed ourselves to integrating in our upcoming national plans the achievement of the MDGs as a fundamental priority. Emphasis will be placed on national appropriations for MDGs, institutional capacity-building, improvement of the legal framework and promotion of a dialogue with the various actors, particularly the private sector and civil society.

These new trends, in terms of good governance — in particular, reducing costs for security, scrupulous management of public finances and the priority allocation of resources to social sectors to combat poverty — will provide a new impetus to speed up the implementation of the MDGs in Mauritania. Nevertheless, the scope and requirements of the task go beyond the country's capacity and call for ongoing mobilization on the part of the donors to help finance development and overcome poverty.

The determined wish of Mauritania's Military Council for Justice and Democracy to build a democratic society is apparent from the agenda for a democratic transition, which sets out the following points: first, organizing a constitutional referendum within 12 months; secondly, organizing legislative and presidential elections that are free and transparent, in two years at the most; thirdly, reform of the judiciary to guarantee its independence and transparency; and, fourthly, the establishment of a system of good economic governance. The various measures adopted since the correctionist movement of 3 August 2005 will ensure the carrying out of this agenda and will usher in a new democratic era, one that will be full of hope for the people of Mauritania. The implementation of these measures will be in addition to the formation of a transitional civil Government, the release of all political prisoners sentenced for their opinions, the ineligibility of the present members of the Military Council to stand in future legislative and presidential elections and, lastly, the opening up of public media.

This climate of freedom and national harmony will create conditions favourable to the success of the democratic transition process and to the mobilization of all Mauritanian citizens in achieving the MDGs, the purpose of the Summit that brings us together today.

In conclusion, I sincerely thank both fraternal and friendly countries and the international and regional organizations for their support. We reiterate our appeal to them for encouragement as we build and develop a democratic and prosperous Mauritania.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor next to His Excellency Mr. Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalghem, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Shalghem (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the condolences of the Libyan people and their leader, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, to the people and Government of the United States of America for the tragedy spawned by Hurricane Katrina.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on their election to preside over the High-level Plenary Meeting. Undoubtedly, the deliberations of this forum will be guided effectively and will achieve optimal results, thanks to their wisdom and competence. I would like also to take this opportunity to express our satisfaction with the manner in which their predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of Gabon, steered the deliberations of the previous session of the General Assembly and the intensive consultations that were conducted throughout the past year in preparation for this meeting.

We wish also to express our gratitude for the efforts exerted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to carry out the decisions of the Organization, to fulfil the

goals of the Charter and to embark on a comprehensive reform process of all United Nations bodies.

Since the founding of the United Nations, our countries have convened regularly at this forum in order to realize the objectives embodied in the Charter and achieve the aspirations of our peoples to the attainment of peace, security, progress and prosperity through joint efforts. A great deal has been achieved in some areas, but many challenges remain. Some of these challenges are older than this Organization, such as poverty, ignorance, disease and armed conflict. Others are new, brought about by the changes and scientific progress that the world has witnessed in recent decades. These challenges include eliminating weapons of mass destruction, countering terrorism and transnational organized crime, reaping maximum benefits from the information revolution and making optimum use of biotechnology, taking into account ethical norms and considerations.

International solidarity, translated into concrete action, is the only way to establish an equitable global economic system that would achieve sustainable development and lead to partnership on an equal footing between North and South. Such solidarity would be conducive to realizing the objectives expressed in the Millennium Declaration.

To reach all these goals, we have to find ways of achieving the objectives set out in the Millennium and Doha Declarations and by the Monterrey and Johannesburg Conferences for optimal use of the earth's resources, for putting an end to conflicts, poverty, illiteracy, epidemic diseases such as AIDS and malaria, for provision of water for all and for achievement of sustainable development.

We also need effective international cooperation, under the umbrella of the United Nations, in order to eradicate terrorism and transnational organized crime, eliminate all weapons of mass destruction and ensure full respect for human rights and the rule of law. Moreover, we need to strengthen international solidarity in combating racism and xenophobia and implementing our obligations to protect the environment and counter desertification.

It is also incumbent upon us to work seriously towards the achievement of our target of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by the year 2015, take decisive action to resolve the problem of external debt, which burdens a number of developing countries, and remove the obstacles that impede the access of their products to international markets.

Developed countries also have an obligation to provide as official development assistance to developing countries the agreed-upon percentage of their gross national income. Furthermore, developed countries that impose coercive measures on some developing countries must put an end to such measures in a show of respect for international decisions that have condemned such measures and have asked for their cancellation.

We seize this occasion to urge creditors, from both developed countries and international institutions, to cancel the debts of poor countries. We call for the intensification of international efforts to eradicate agricultural pests, introduce low-cost water desalination plants, combat desertification, and reclaim lands and render them suitable for agriculture.

Sixty years have elapsed since this Organization was founded. Yet, despite all the sincere efforts that have been made, it has not lived up to its Charter promises in such matters as alleviating human suffering caused by war, poverty, disease and illiteracy. This state of affairs has resulted from the fact that the victorious countries that wrote the Charter conferred on themselves rights and privileges which led to the marginalization of the General Assembly and rendered the Security Council, in its present form, inequitable and unbalanced. Those factors made the Organization less democratic and led to abuse of the veto privilege. Those States deemed friends have received support even when they were wrong, enabling them to enjoy impunity and escape condemnation. Other States, however, have been unjustly punished by sanctions because their policies were considered inharmonious with those of several of the privileged countries on the Security Council. The United Nations has thus failed to administer justice to all peoples, making it imperative for all of us to endeavour to reform the Organization.

In view of the fact that there are now 191 Member States and that new problems impeding emancipation and growth have arisen — including development, terrorism, the environment, poverty and epidemics — reform requires that decision-making power rests solely with the General Assembly. All seats in the General Assembly should be equal, and the Security Council should become a mechanism for

implementing General Assembly resolutions, not a forum for vetoing them.

We have made our position known in document A/59/876 of 18 July 2005. Africa is the only continent that does not have the permanent seat on the Security Council that it deserves. This should be taken into account in reforming the United Nations. Such reform should enable the continent to compete for new permanent seats on the Security Council.

As a member of the African Union, we affirm our adherence to the African Common Position issued by the fifth African Union Summit, held in Sirte on 4 and 5 July 2005, and reaffirmed by the fourth extraordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 4 August 2005. That Position holds that two permanent Security Council seats should be allocated to Africa, with full privileges, including the power of veto, in addition to five non-permanent seats. It also calls for strengthening the lead role of the General Assembly.

We prefer that the two permanent African seats be reserved for the African Union rather than for specific countries. We thank Members for having responded to our proposal to postpone discussion of Security Council reform in order to allow for the possibility for reaching a practical formula that would serve peace, security, stability and progress in the world.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Somali Republic.

Mr. Ismail (Somalia): It gives me great pleasure to address this assembly of world leaders and to present our sincere congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons on their well-deserved election. We are confident that they will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. Let me also commend Mr. Jean Ping for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Assembly during his presidency.

On behalf of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia allow me first and foremost to convey our sincere condolences to the President and the people of the United States of America, in particular to the populations living on the Gulf coast, where a ferocious hurricane has killed and displaced thousands of people, destroying cities and infrastructure, causing untold hardship and suffering. We are indeed happy and encouraged by the overwhelming support and international solidarity extended to the victims of that tragedy and hope that the distressed families will regain normal life as soon as possible. The Somali people truly associate themselves with the anxieties and pain experienced by the people of the United States of America, and we feel that our human solidarity could be considered as a most valuable expression of compassion and moral help.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations upon its sixtieth anniversary and to express our renewed confidence and commitment to this world body working for international peace and the progress of humanity. We also commend the Organization for the tireless and invaluable contribution it has made towards the attainment of sustainable peace and socio-economic development, as well as for upholding the political rights of all people, irrespective of race, gender, social status or beliefs.

Of course, nobody can deny that setbacks and general disappointments were unavoidable in the history of the United Nations and that certain expectations were not completely fulfilled, but the ideals remain intact and as valid as on the day of the Organization's inception.

The world is still ravaged by conflicts, political misperceptions and poverty that still need to be addressed so that harmony, understanding and an equitable sharing of resources can be attained in the interest of world peace and unprejudiced international cooperation.

The recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to a State of their own alongside Israel and a peaceful Middle East region are still fundamental aims to be achieved so as to strengthen world peace and security.

In this new post-cold-war era, internal conflicts are replacing inter-State confrontations in international affairs. Any new situation demands a fresh approach, so there is a need for a new outlook in order to have sustainable regional and international stability.

Poverty and underdevelopment cannot be dissociated from the increased international tension and conflict that afflict political stability in various parts of the world, thus poisoning normal relationships between nations, because boundaries are pointless in

this age of global interaction. There can be no human security unless this reality of interconnectedness is taken into proper consideration in all our policy and decision-making processes. Today, the balance of rational reasoning is the only guarantee of international security and comprehension; we cannot rely on imbalances of force.

Reforming the United Nations is one of the key ways to face all of these new challenges of the new millennium by making the Organization more democratic, transparent, efficient and capable of responding to the diverse aspirations and concerns of the various components of the international community at the continental and regional levels.

Let me now turn to the current developments in my country, Somalia. The conflict that has prevailed in Somalia for the past 14 years is attributed basically to the absence of an adequate international response. It is well known that the upsurge of civil war has led to a total collapse of our national institutions and infrastructure, with drastic consequences and grave implications for the stability of the entire region and for international peace and security.

I am not here to dwell at length on the causes of the conflict, but on its costs and consequences, since evil can originate from imperceptible man-made tragedies and circumstances. International political indifference and a sense of inertia have characterized the conduct of the international community, which has aggravated the civil war and allowed unabated human suffering and environmental destruction to continue in my country. What the Somali people desire and deserve is active engagement on the part of the international community and not abandonment or a surrender of hope.

The past, with all its sorrows, is past but the repercussions of forgotten international obligations are still vivid and present. The international community must contribute to the revival of our State and to stand by our side in our effort to rebuild our nation rather than indulging in trivialities. Here, there must be synergy of great minds and principled commitments to help the Somali people overcome their political and human debacle rather than assuming a pathetic or passive attitude.

In this context, however, we cannot forget the critical role of States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, the IGAD Partners Forum, the European Union, the Arab League and the United Nations in providing support and encouragement for the Somali national reconciliation process that took place in Kenya for almost three years.

At this juncture, allow me to express our deep gratitude to the Government and the people of Kenya for hosting the Somali National Reconciliation Conference. We also thank our brothers in Kenya and in all neighbouring countries for sheltering thousands of Somali refugees in their territory throughout these years of turmoil and conflict.

Moreover, a special tribute goes to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan for his tireless efforts to bring the Somali conflict to an end and for all the humanitarian aid that has been provided during these long years of unrest and civil strife.

The culmination of all these efforts was the establishment of a Transitional Federal Government, whose delegation to this summit is guided by His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Now, as we speak, the new state institutions are operating from within our country, temporarily from Jowhar, the provincial capital of the lower Shabelle region, situated only 90 kilometres from Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia.

The Transitional Federal Government is actively engaged in promoting a favourable political and security climate and is committed to establishing operational offices in the capital and in other parts of the country as an essential part of its political obligation to reach out to the entire population and promote broad-based, grassroots reconciliation.

The Transitional Federal Government is committed to the strengthening and consolidation of the transitional institutions as pillars of democratic governance without, at the same time, condoning the use of domestic differences of opinion to undermine the achievements of a two-year-long reconciliation process and perpetuate anarchy and chaos again.

However, direct dialogue will be our key instrument to promote inter-institutional cooperation without sacrificing the aspirations of our people. No group will ever be denied the opportunity to have an independent political platform, within the context of

normal and acceptable parliamentary and constitutional traditions.

We feel that the stability of Somalia should not be the work of the Somalis alone, as wickedly — I repeat wickedly — propagated and as often repeated. Though the responsibility for past failure is partly ours, the international community has no excuse for distancing itself, regardless of what situation prevails. It is, therefore, our firm belief that the international community should support us fully in this crucial consolidation period so as to restore peace and stability completely for the sake of nation-building and the reconstruction of our country, since everything has to start from scratch.

The absence of firm support for the readmission of Somalia into the fold of the international community and for making it stable will only play into the hands of international terrorism and of those who promote the continuation of an environment of chaos and lawlessness.

In conclusion, the Transitional Federal Government deems this rostrum the appropriate place from which to launch a vibrant appeal to the members of the international community to come to the aid of Somalia with all their determination and resources, to help our people overcome 14 years of civil war and the consequent deterioration in all spheres of life. That will help not only to safeguard regional stability but also to safeguard the stability of the international community as well.

The Transitional Federal Government strongly urges the United Nations to support the current Intergovernmental Authority on Development and African Union efforts to send a peace stabilization mission to Somalia in order to help restore peace and security and prevent a reoccurrence of hostilities and violence, so that the transition period will be instrumental in establishing the democratic society to which we aspire and which will permit us to achieve long-lasting peace once again.

For the values of solidarity to prevail as far as Somalia is concerned, we urgently call upon the international community to act swiftly, without wait-and-see attitudes, which could produce an undesired slide backwards instead of forward movement towards stability and institutional consolidation.

In the name of our people — men, women, children, elders, all the displaced families and our deprived younger generation — I strongly appeal to the Assembly and, in all humility, hope that our plea will be heeded.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency Mr. Mario Fortín Midence, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras.

Mr. Fortín Midence (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Multilateralism is a political necessity. Honduras feels protected by an effective multilateral system based on full respect for international law and built on the foundations of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

As we assess these 60 years of our Organization's history — an anniversary we celebrate with joy — we view this summit and this General Assembly as an opportunity for hope, change and renewal. Never before in history have so many heads of State and Government been present and participated in the debates as during these three days. That encourages us.

Nonetheless, we are concerned that we have not yet been able to achieve a higher level of understanding on elements that are vital to allow our Organization to assume greater responsibility vis-à-vis the challenges of this millennium. It was with some disappointment that we received the report dealing with the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. We would have liked further progress rather than the deferral of a decision to an uncertain date. It would have been gratifying to come out of this meeting with an agreement on the reform of the Security Council and to see admitted to the Council new States that are net contributors to the economic and social development of peoples, such as Japan and Germany. We would also have been pleased to return to our home country with a stronger agreement to ensure the full implementation of fundamental human rights. We regret the fact that work was not completed in time for the creation of the Human Rights Council, an initiative proposed by the Secretary-General which we enthusiastically support.

Our Charter enshrines universality of participation as well as the inalienable right of all peace-loving people that abide by its principles to be present in our deliberations and to be stakeholders in the agreements adopted here. For this reason, we understand the aspiration of the people of Taiwan, who

want to share with us the responsibility of building a better world for all.

Conscious of our commitment to international peace and security, we express our hope that a comprehensive convention on terrorism will be concluded as soon as possible. Terrorism is a scourge that tramples all principles underfoot, be they moral or religious, and violates all human rights. For this reason, we welcome the assessment document as an instrument to speed our work and to make new and stronger agreements possible.

Five minutes to assess progress and evaluate obstacles on the path to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is very little time. Honduras is following the course charted by our national consensus, reflected in the formulation of a strategy for poverty reduction and a policy for its implementation. Honduras is taking firm steps towards building a more inclusive democracy.

Our gross domestic product (GDP) has exceeded the goals we set, and investment in the fight against poverty, has, as a proportion of GDP, also been slightly higher than forecast. Indicators in education, the environment, gender issues and other areas are also encouraging, but they have not reached the level to which my Government aspires.

It is our hope that the resources released through foreign debt cancellation, in the framework of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, the Paris Club and the G-8, and the redirection of those funds to finance integral development through the fight against poverty will do much to help us meet the deadline in attaining our goals for the year 2015. All Hondurans are firmly committed to this.

Equally important in this regard are the funds from the Millennium Challenge Account, which are geared towards the sectors of road infrastructure and agricultural productivity. Although some progress has been made, that very progress is jeopardized by high prices for petroleum products. In fact, these high prices undermine, threaten and compromise the fight against poverty and all the goals that we have established and pledged to fulfil by the year 2015. The increase in fuel prices in recent months represents for Honduras an expenditure 25 times higher than what is invested each year in free school lunches for all the children of our country. These prices are unacceptable. They constitute an affront to the poor, who thereby become further impoverished.

Our Organization must, as a matter of urgency and without excuses, seek a mechanism that can help to stem this constant increase, the impact of which on developing countries is really dramatic.

No less dramatic and moving are the scenes showing the tragedy in the southern states of the United States of America. Hundreds of thousands of persons, including a very large number of Hondurans, are now trying to find a way to overcome the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. We extend to all of them the warm solidarity of the people of Honduras and of the Government of President Ricardo Maduro.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to inform members about the corrected versions of paragraphs 60 (a), 163 and 164 (c) of the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1). Please discard earlier versions and use only the 6.30 p.m. version, which is now being distributed. The 6.30 p.m. version is the only valid one.

I also wish to inform members that delegations having linguistic concerns about draft resolution A/60/L.1 should transmit them in writing to the Secretariat. Such linguistic corrections will be reflected in the final version of the draft resolution.

I call now on His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Mohamed Alsaidi, Chairman of the delegation of Yemen.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Eliasson on his election to the presidency of this session.

It is an honour to participate in this Meeting, where we are considering the extent to which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been achieved in an effort to create a world of prosperity and progress.

It is my duty to present the condolences and sympathies of the Government and the people of the Republic of Yemen to the people and the Government of the United States of America in the wake of the recent natural disaster, Hurricane Katrina. We must create an international mechanism within this Organization to strengthen and coordinate efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of victims of natural

disasters, and also to design early warning systems to reduce the colossal losses and damage caused by them.

Now that we have entered the twenty-first century, we must take another look at the state of international relations, so that they will be based on trust, dialogue and cooperation. We must, therefore, focus totally on United Nations reform, reconciling viewpoints, while avoiding fragmented interests that would not help us to achieve the goals of such reform.

While the reform process will allow us to expand some bodies or to create other bodies, the aim must be to strengthen credibility and transparency, while at the same time enhancing the role of the Organization and its effectiveness in maintaining and building peace.

The Republic of Yemen stresses the importance of implementing the MDGs adopted in 2000, as well as the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit, in order to free humankind from want, poverty and disease. At the same time, we are convinced that those lofty objectives cannot be achieved unless there is equity in international trade relations. Indeed, trade barriers and protectionism clash with the objectives of the World Trade Organization and undermine the attainment of the MDGs in developing countries. It is also important for developed countries to fulfil their commitments, by providing support and the necessary investments to help build capacities in the least developed countries.

We are convinced of the importance of the MDGs and how to achieve them; therefore, our country has undertaken some financial, administrative and legal reforms and measures with the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society partners, which are essential in helping us achieve socio-economic progress in our country.

Moreover, the Government of Yemen, in cooperation with donor countries, international organizations and specialized agencies, has established its second five-year plan to curb poverty by means of quick-impact projects to train professionals, provide health services and build roads, so that all public services reach all parts of the country. We should also commend the G-8 countries on what they have done to provide debt relief to 16 African countries; but other countries also suffer from debt, and the G-8 should give similar attention to countries that have the same problems.

I am certain that if international efforts to achieve economic and political reform, promote good governance and combat poverty were to go beyond mere words and become programmes and plans of action, humanity would know stability and prosperity and international relations would be marked by mutual understanding, genuine partnership and converging interests.

Finally, I should like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his ongoing efforts to reform our Organization. I also wish to thank Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for guiding the difficult negotiations that culminated in the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1). We extend to him our best wishes.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): We shall now hear brief oral presentations by the Chairpersons of the four round-table sessions. I first give the floor to the Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia, Ambassador Frances Lisson, who, on behalf of the Chairman of the round-table session held on Wednesday afternoon, His Excellency Mr. John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia, will present a summary of that round table.

Ms. Lisson (Australia): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly, on behalf of the Chairman of round table 1, His Excellency Mr. John Howard, the Prime Minister of Australia, a brief summary of the round table, which was held on Wednesday, 14 September 2005. Prime Minister Howard had to leave this afternoon and has asked me to present the statement on his behalf.

The broad sentiment that was shared in the round table was a sense of optimism for the future of the United Nations. That prevalent sentiment was evident despite some ambivalent comments around the table on the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1) to be adopted by the Assembly later this evening. Most of the participants felt that the draft outcome document excluded many things which should have been at its heart and that it has not gone far enough in other matters. As one participant put it, this view is the result of the politics of expectation: the expectations of this summit were much higher and much more wide-ranging than what is contained in the draft outcome document. The major sense of disappointment relates to neglect of the issues of disarmament and the risk of nuclear proliferation.

However, on the positive side, strong support was expressed for the Peacebuilding Commission, the revamping of the United Nations human rights machinery and the recognition of the mutual interdependence of the developed and the developing worlds. The other significant trend in our discussions was the strong emphasis on poverty eradication and on meeting our commitments for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

In summary, the overall sense of the round table was that the draft outcome document represents a general balance of issues and that it contains clear benefits that are achievable through the Peacebuilding Commission, the Democracy Fund, the "responsibility to protect" and development outcomes.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Towpik, who, on behalf of the Chairman of the round-table session held yesterday morning, His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, will present the summary of that round table.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): Half an hour ago, the President of Poland, Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, had to leave the Hall, with great regret, for technical reasons. I will read out his report.

> "More than 26 world leaders and representatives of United Nations entities, took the floor to evaluate our draft outcome document (A/60/L.1), to highlight its gaps and other deficiencies, to bring out the promising elements and to make further suggestions for reforms. These leaders emphasized that multilateralism was the only way to respond to the challenges and threats of the increasingly interdependent and globalized age of the twenty-first century. There was a remarkable call to make the summit the summit of solidarity, especially with Africa, the summit of responsibility in a broad partnership for development, the summit of the individual with progress on human rights and the new Human Rights Council, and, last but not least, the summit of courage to accelerate the reform of the United Nations.
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> "My impression of the round-table discussion is that we share a positive feeling about the sixtieth-anniversary summit of the United Nations. As one of the participants said, the train is moving in a good direction, but we need to ensure that there are no accidents on the way. The reforms at all levels have to be pursued with a sense of justice, fair play and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and civil liberties. As another participating leader put it, our global village needs global democracy. The general view was that the reforms are not a one-off event but a process, a step in a long journey.
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> "My second impression is that the participants strongly supported the idea of enhancing our efforts to promote development, including making the Millennium Development Goals an operational reality. Development and poverty eradication remain one of the most important pillars of the United Nations, and we must not be found lacking in energy in realizing those ambitious Goals when we reach 2015. International solidarity for development seems to be a necessity, and all domestic efforts must be complemented by those of the international community at large.
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> "My third general observation on the round-table discussion concerns the strong support expressed for the initiatives of strengthening human rights and promoting democracy. The launching of the Democracy Fund and the intention to continue work on the establishment of the Human Rights Council need to be consolidated, and our objectives in this regard should be reinforced and carried out.
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> "The three hours of discussions in an informal, interactive mode lead me to conclude that there are more areas of convergence than of divergence. The summit has provided us with an excellent opportunity for candid exchanges, and I conclude by sharing the sense of optimism for the future of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. But there is a long way to go, and determination and the full implementation of our decisions and resolutions will be required."

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to the Chairperson of the round-table session held yesterday afternoon, His Excellency The Honourable Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda): It was an honour and a privilege for me to chair round table 3, and now I face the daunting task of presenting to the Assembly a summary of the complex discussion. I would like to thank those leaders who participated actively in round table 3 for what I believe was an inspiring exchange of views on a broad canvas of issues.

At a general level, my sense of the round table is that the leaders expressed both enthusiasm and frustration, enthusiasm on the progress made in some areas and, at the same time, frustration with the lack of progress in other areas. I believe that while much remains to be done for a world free from want and fear, the discussion underscored that the steps taken so far are significant in helping to meet the aspirations and the concerns of people everywhere. The summit, after all, is not the proverbial silver bullet but the launch of a process and the indication of the collective will for change.

Many of the statements around the table focused on development. Participants stressed the importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Examples were provided of how the Millennium Development Goals were systematically used by national institutions to assess and guide public policies in the economic and social fields. Some leaders spoke of the adoption of new targets, for example, on domestic violence. And the idea of strengthening the global partnership to implement the MDGs was supported.

Speakers underlined the need for a coherent policy on trade and aid, as well as the need to assess the impact of aid policies, for example, procurement rules on the quality of aid. Some mutually reinforcing deficits were highlighted as undermining the achievement of MDGs, namely the deficit of resources and limited implementation.

The unique challenges of landlocked and small island developing nations were addressed. Several participants underscored the potential of information and communications technologies (ICT) to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals and, in light of this, the importance of improving developing countries' access to ICT. Concerns about the global environment, especially the vulnerability of small island developing States, pointed to the need for tackling diverse problems in a spirit of solidarity.

The increased presence of United Nations field offices in small island developing States was considered necessary to cover the wide geographic areas over which the islands are spread, ensuring environmental sustainability, resolute action on climate change before the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012 and concrete measures on desertification were all stressed as key global challenges.

The General Assembly's decision to cancel debt arrears for several highly indebted poor countries was praised, yet participants noted that the quality and effectiveness of aid were equally important and that all official development assistance should be equally provided to all countries in need.

Of concern was the lack of progress in addressing the debt problem of middle-income countries. Participants were also concerned about the issue of conditionality attached to debt cancellation and the impact this would have on the quality of aid.

In addition, the need for coherence of aid and trade policies was underlined in order to ensure that official development assistance, trade and debt relief, when taken together, would lead to a net result that was positive for development.

The hope was expressed that the G-8 commitment to double aid to Africa by 2010 would be realized. Efforts made by Africa to stand as a solid counterpart to its development partners were emphasized. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was recognized as a good home-made initiative which deserved strong external support.

The importance of making international trade a real engine for development was emphasized. The early completion of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations was considered essential. Participants welcomed the reference in the outcome document to access and benefit sharing in relation to genetic resources and underlined the importance of global cooperation in developing information and knowledge-based societies as a vehicle to nurture democracy and eradicate poverty.

The link between humanitarian assistance and development was emphasized and the need for greater international cooperation to establish the context for

evolving durable solutions and addressing root causes of crises, abuse and instability highlighted.

Participants welcomed the proposed reform of the United Nations human rights machinery. Some called for the development of a set of criteria against which the human rights record of all countries would be assessed.

Speakers stressed the need for United Nations reform and emphasized that this historic opportunity to strengthen the United Nations should not be missed and that the reform process should be guided by open and extensive consultations.

It was also stressed that the interests of developing countries, which account for two thirds of United Nations membership, should be safeguarded in the process. The need for a more representative Security Council was emphasized, including through an increased presence and weight of African countries. A reformed United Nations would give developing countries a sense of ownership in the Organization, making the decisions of its organs easier to implement.

Despite the mixed views we have on the details of the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1), it was heartening for me to hear the continued faith expressed in multilateralism through the United Nations in order to meet the aspirations of our people. I hope that the promise of the draft outcome document will be realized through quick progress on the commitments contained therein. Where further action is needed, the General Assembly should work extra hours and hard to ensure that the contours of the ideas are transformed into firm legislative and operational realities before momentum is lost.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to the Chairman of the round-table session held this morning, His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

President Obasanjo: It gives me great pleasure to present to the General Assembly a brief summary of round table 4, which was held this morning and which I had the honour to chair. Members have heard summaries of three round tables already, and, while not breaking new ground, round table 4 added its own perspectives to the forthcoming deliberation.

My overall impression of this morning's candid discussion is that our shared assessment of the summit is that it is a success. Not an unqualified success in the sense that all 191 Member States can go home and claim that they have achieved everything that they wanted. But a success in that we reaffirmed our faith in the multilateral system. We have also prepared the groundwork for the significant changes and reforms in which this Assembly must actively engage to give effective meaning in a legislative and operational sense.

The outcome document clearly emphasizes the vital role that the United Nations has to play in the twenty-first century, particularly in its broad recognition of the interconnection between security and development, the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the establishment of the principle of the responsibility to protect, and the emerging will to give shape to a Human Rights Council.

Of course, gaps and omissions remain. These include the failure to agree on reform of the Security Council, which no longer represents the realities of 2005, or on measures to further non-proliferation and disarmament, and a sense of disappointment that the high expectations on a broad range of issues, including the concept of impunity and the role of the International Criminal Court, were not met. The language on the right to protect crystallizes a commitment to make sure that we do not see a repeat of Rwanda, Darfur and other terrible events that have characterized the past decade.

This is a truly significant achievement. It must be accompanied with a will to protect. Participants also reiterated their condemnation of terrorism as one of the greatest threats to international peace and security and emphasized the importance of redoubling efforts towards a global convention against terrorism.

The need to assist developing countries lacking capacity to combat terrorism was also stressed. One area that was singled out was the need for safe transportation by sea and air. Security of the sea lanes must be enhanced. Development must remain at the centre of trade negotiation. Moreover, globalization must be more inclusive and equitable. The specific needs of developing countries must be taken into consideration and favourable access to markets should be granted to small countries. Special efforts have to be made to help developing countries, and especially those in Africa, to build an environment able to attract foreign investment.

A concern regarding the capacity of low- and middle-income countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals was also expressed. One suggestion was to facilitate access to international financial institutions for countries listed as low- and medium-income States. We need reform of the international monetary and financial institutions, as well as to set right other systemic imbalances, to ensure equitable development.

Another cause for optimism is the promise of the reform of the management and budget of the United Nations. A broad consensus emerged with regard to the need to strengthen and reform the United Nations so that it can effectively play its vital role in addressing the multidimensional challenges faced by the international community in the twenty-first century. Emphasis was laid on the need to heighten democratization in the decision-making of international organizations. In that connection, one participant called for the strengthening of the power of the Economic and Social Council so that it can address the integration of trade and finance and development issues.

Finally — and this will be the greatest challenge of all — national commitments must now be fulfilled. The gap between commitments and actions should not continue, and we should return home, after the summit, determined to take action at the national and international levels. In that context, the role of national parliaments in defining and implementing development policies was identified — a role which could be maximized through a strategic partnership between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations.

I leave here today with a profound sense of optimism for the days ahead. While it is clear that much work remains to be done by the international community at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, nevertheless the progress achieved by the summit in its draft outcome document must not be underestimated. The momentum gained must continue in order to move forward with the implementation of the broad agreement achieved.

Items 48 and 121 of the provisional agenda

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/60/L.1)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): We shall now turn to draft resolution A/60/L.1, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome".

We, the leaders of the world, have for three days discussed how the United Nations can be strengthened to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The basis for our deliberations has been the draft outcome document negotiated under the able leadership of Mr. Jean Ping, former President of the General Assembly, and referred to the summit by the General Assembly earlier this week. It is a package of changes to enhance the system of collective security. Following the Millennium Declaration, it reviews progress and makes recommendations in the areas of development, peace and security, human rights and institutional reform. The Assembly has before it document A/60/L.1. It is my sincere hope that this Meeting can adopt the document entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome", thereby sending a strong political message about our collective commitment to the United Nations and its Charter.

Before proceeding further, I should like to consult the Assembly, with a view to proceeding with the consideration of draft resolution A/60/L.1, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome". In that connection, since the draft resolution has only been circulated this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure. The relevant provision of rule 78 reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with my proposal to waive that provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure.

It was so decided.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.1.

I call on the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Rodríguez Araque (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): These have been very bright, warm days in New York. In contrast, however, the decision with regard to the outcome document, which may very possibly be endorsed in the next few minutes, will be a rather grim one. It was conceived in darkness and brought forth from the shadows to be approved here, in violation of the basic democratic processes governing the practice of sound democracy in the world.

This process did in fact begin with a wide-ranging debate that aroused the hope that, given the scope of that debate and the consultations that occurred initially, it would also be possible for there to be a broad and informed discussion that enjoyed the measured agreement of the Assembly. But then the analysis and preparation of the document was restricted to a small group of 32 persons, and subsequently to an even smaller group of 15 persons. It is my understanding that, in the end, many of the comments made from various quarters were put aside by an even smaller group.

In the reservation that I was obliged to express on behalf of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the fifty-ninth session, I indicated that the procedure followed was so grotesque that it did not even allow us an opportunity to express an opinion in favour of the aspects of the draft document with which we agreed. For the delegation of Venezuela and the vast majority of delegations represented at the Assembly there was absolutely no possibility to express the opinions that had been consistently expressed during the deliberations in which we had been invited to participate as sovereign countries. As sovereign countries, we have exactly the same rights as every other country in the General Assembly.

Moreover, in view of all the document's shortcomings, we could have left it pending, rather than considering it concluded as is now being attempted, and continued the debate in order to enrich and improve it in the course of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. Instead of doing that and promoting a democratic and productive discussion, it was decided from the beginning to bring the document here. And it will now be insisted that we adopt a document that contains parts, which I will shortly enumerate, that will have serious consequences for the great majority of the nations that are Members of the Assembly. In the words of a well-known Venezuelan politician, the Assembly will now almost certainly adopt that document under duress and while holding its nose. It seems evident that the ends have been a pretext, if not a justification, for the abhorrent and anti-democratic means that have been utilized. This is a very grave precedent. Nothing good awaits the Organization if it engages in such practices.

I shall be brief, as time does not permit me to speak for as long as the situation deserves. But I should like to cite some of the omissions, as well as some of the issues included, in the document that should merit a very broad-ranging, careful and in-depth debate in the Assembly.

With regard to terrorism, the document makes no reference whatever to a fact that constantly impairs the sovereignty of weak countries, namely, State terrorism. It would seem that acts of terrorism, as condemnable as they are, are only condemnable if they are carried out by individuals or organizations. It is as though there were no real proven danger of State terrorism. The document makes no distinction between terrorist acts and the legitimate action of peoples to protect their sovereignty. This is an attempt to tie the hands of countries that cherish their sovereignty and independence and want to fight in defence of those inalienable principles.

The document establishes a Peacebuilding Commission. Who will be the members of the organizational committee charged with establishing that body? They will be the Security Council, financial institutions and the main contributors to the Organization. One can therefore already foresee the establishment of a veritable monopoly and dictatorial control over the exercise of the Commission's functions.

The document also refers to two interrelated matters, namely, the so-called responsibility to protect and the Human Rights Council. A reading of the pertinent paragraphs in the document immediately raises the question of who is in a position to "protect"

under the terms of the document, as well as who is in a position to send troops many thousands of miles away. Who has the financial resources, weapons and logistics to carry out actions to protect, especially given that, as I have emphasized, the concept of responsibility to protect is related to the Human Rights Council? In that connection, I would propose for discussion that countries that have not ratified international human rights conventions should not be part of the Human Rights Council. For it is truly inconceivable that States that have not ratified such conventions should have any influence in the area of human rights.

The document also sets up the Democracy Fund. How will it be administered? How large will it be? Apart from the very generic terms used to describe it, what are to be its objectives? We in Venezuela have some experience with the promotion of democracy being used as a pretext. There has been brazen interference in the internal affairs of our country, including the financing of groups that, in the guise of operating as non-governmental organizations, have acted as political parties and have even taken part in violent acts against the State of Venezuela. That included such clearly illegal acts as the coup of April 2002, which, together with the oil coup, caused losses to Venezuela of approximately $20 billion in 2002 alone.

The document makes absolutely no reference to one of the worst threats to humankind's future or to the universal and profoundly human yearning for comprehensive and unconditional nuclear disarmament. Today the major powers possess weapons of mass destruction capable of destroying all life on the planet many times over. And yet there is not even the most tepid, faint or remote reference to that very heart-felt desire on the part of the vast majority of the world's people.

Far from contributing to the strengthening of the General Assembly, as the most basic principle and fundamental exercise of democracy would suggest, the general trend is to restrict the competence of the Assembly and to increasingly concentrate power in small groups, such as the ones to which I have just referred: the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Democracy Fund. In short, this represents an increasing and ever-more-dangerous curtailment of the exercise of democracy in the General Assembly, which is the essential precondition for the actual empowerment that the General Assembly should enjoy. And as if that were not enough, this meeting, which was convened to draw up a balance sheet of the Millennium Development Goals, will not have enabled us to leave the Assembly and return to our countries with a clear picture of the situation vis-à-vis the obligations and commitments made.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): We have heard the only statement in explanation of position before the adoption of draft resolution A/60/L.1.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.1, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome". In that connection, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the statement regarding programme budget implications contained in paragraph 14 of document A/60/355, which reads as follows:

> "The Fifth Committee will examine during the sixtieth session of the Assembly both a detailed statement of the programme budget implications arising from the draft resolution and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon. Consequently, appropriate financial provisions will be incorporated within the budget appropriations to be adopted before the close of the first part of the sixtieth session."

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.1, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome", as corrected?

> *Draft resolution A/60/L.1, as corrected, was adopted* (resolution 60/1).

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution, may I remind speakers that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): The United States of America has joined the consensus on the adoption of the outcome document. We thank President Ping and President Eliasson, their staffs, facilitators and advisers for their assistance in preparing the document. They had a difficult job. We also thank other Member States for coming to agreement after two weeks of difficult negotiations.

We are pleased that Member States have agreed to denounce terrorism in all its forms, advance the

cause of development, reform the management of the United Nations, establish a Peacebuilding Commission and create a Human Rights Council.

I do wish to make one point clear: the United States understands that reference to the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the use of the phrase "reproductive health" in paragraphs 57 (g) and 58 (c) of the outcome document do not create any rights and cannot be interpreted to constitute support, endorsement or promotion of abortion.

The outcome document represents an important step in a long process of United Nations reform. We cannot allow the reform effort to be derailed or to run out of steam. The United States, through its representatives at the United Nations, will work tirelessly during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and beyond to ensure that reform occurs. We can assure you that the American people, and all peoples of the world, will be watching closely as we proceed.

Mr. Pérez Reque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has just adopted draft resolution A/60/L.1, which contains the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting. As the Assembly is aware, during the closing meeting of the fifty-ninth session, Cuba expressed its reservations and comments with regard to the document, which we should now like to reiterate.

The gross irregularities in the negotiating process — which included the imposition of terms, secrecy, exclusion and discrimination — have now been compounded by the grave omissions in this document. We did not even include references to nuclear disarmament or general and complete disarmament, which have been aspirations of the majority of the international community for the last four decades. Nor was it agreed to include concrete steps to attempt to meet the Millennium Development Goals, which, despite their inadequacies in the face of the serious problems currently confronting third-world countries, seem very unlikely to be achieved by the target dates agreed five years ago. Concerns about development, trade, the environment and other issues of fundamental interest to most Members of the Organization have suffered an unforgivable setback.

On the other hand, without even taking into account the fact that the last-minute submission of 750 amendments jeopardized the summit, the delegation of the United States and its closest allies insisted inordinately on the establishment of funds, councils, commissions and controls of all sorts that, instead of strengthening the role of the Organization, serve to dilute and distort it and to undermine the unity essential to saving the lives of the many millions of people in the world who today suffer from poverty, hunger and ill health. In addition, under enormous pressure, concepts such as the responsibility to protect and human security have been included. Those concepts run the risk of being invoked in the future as a pretext for aggression against our countries.

This has been the summit of selfishness, arrogance and lies: a summit at which some have sought to present as a great achievement the increase in official development assistance through the cancellation of given amounts of foreign debt that debtor countries could not have paid in any case. Where in the document are the concrete commitments to work towards a new international order that is more just and equitable? What we have heard in the Hall instead have been threatening and aggressive statements, including some bordering on insult. My delegation does not believe that we should congratulate ourselves on the outcome of this meeting, and much less on the content of the outcome document.

Yesterday afternoon, President Hugo Chávez of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was very clear in pointing out the serious problems that this Organization, which was established to safeguard and promote peace, dignity, justice and development throughout the world, has, and will continue to have, in fulfilling the purposes of its Charter so long as the powerful insist on preventing those whom the Charter itself defined as "We the peoples" from guiding the future of the United Nations. Cuba fully and unreservedly supports the words of President Chávez.

Now we are facing a new stage in which we need to implement the decisions we have taken today; we believe that it will be a decisive one. In the new negotiation process that lies ahead we cannot repeat the manipulations of the past: the negotiations must be truly open, truly democratic and participatory, and without any extraneous demands whatsoever. We know that there are already delegations working to ensure that that is not the case. Our delegation hopes, Mr. President, that you will become the guarantor of justice and equity in the process that is now beginning.

Mr. Martynov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): A few minutes ago this Hall shook with applause that resounded sadly in our ears. The statements by Venezuela and Cuba reflect that sadness; we understand the feelings articulated by those delegations.

The Charter of our Organization opens with the words "We the peoples of the United Nations", but has the document we have just adopted really brought our nations and peoples together? I am afraid the answer to that is clear to all of us. Does that document strengthen the fundamental freedoms of States to chose their path to development on the basis of United Nations principles and objectives? Does it strengthen and develop the instruments that the community of nations needs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? Does it arm us with the weapons we need to defend the defenceless? I am afraid that the answers to those questions are equally clear.

Having adopted the outcome document, the Republic of Belarus appeals to all delegations to continue to work to bring together all States — large and small, weak and powerful — to achieve the purposes of the Charter and the Millennium Declaration.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic and Co-Chairperson of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Our work has culminated in the adoption of the World Summit Outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting and that is good reason for us to be pleased. That declaration reminds us that the threats and challenges facing the world require a collective understanding and a collective response.

The United Nations is both the bedrock of and the indispensable tool for building an effective multilateral system. We must continue to pursue its reform to ensure that the Organization is managed in a more modern way, better suited to its many missions. We must also continue our efforts to revitalize the General Assembly and, of course, the Security Council. Today millions of people throughout the world are looking to us; the multilateral solidarity embodied in the United Nations offers their one and only hope. Let us find a way to make the next 60 years of the United Nations an era of prosperity, peace, and justice for all the peoples of the world.

I now give the floor to the His Excellency Mr. Göran Persson, Prime Minister of Sweden and Co-Chairperson of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): During the debate at this world summit, leaders from around the world have reaffirmed their strong commitment to international cooperation as the tool for meeting global challenges. Indeed, our commitment to the United Nations and its Charter has been clearly illustrated by our gathering here in such great numbers.

Tonight we have adopted the World Summit Outcome, a document that takes decisive steps to strengthen the United Nations and the collective security system. It also reaffirms our commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals give us hope for a better future, but the political message that emerged from our debate is clear: we need to redouble our efforts. Additional resources must be mobilized and more forceful measures must be taken. We owe that to the millions of men, women and children who suffer from diseases that could be cured, from conflicts that could be prevented and from hunger that could be alleviated.

Negotiations to address future action on climate change will continue at the global level in order to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and stop human interference with the climate system.

We urgently need to conclude a comprehensive convention and agree on a strategy to counter international terrorism, one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

We have decided to establish a Peacebuilding Commission to help countries emerging from conflict to lay the necessary foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development.

We will create a Human Rights Council to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. And we have decided to double the regular resources allocated to strengthen the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human

Rights and to further mainstream human rights throughout the United Nations system.

The prospect that weapons of mass destruction will once again be used is terrifying. We cannot afford to let that happen. Our failure to address at this summit the threat presented by those weapons leaves us with a crucial task ahead. States need to stand by their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and, most urgently, we need to breathe new life into multilateral regimes for managing such weapons. We have taken good decisions to strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the United Nations Secretariat. I have heard many voices calling for a Secretariat fit for the challenges of the twenty-first century. We will follow with keen interest the implementation of the measures spelled out in the Summit Outcome.

True political leadership is about both words and deeds. Over the last few days, we have heard the words. As Co-Chairperson of this High-level Meeting, I very much appreciate what I have heard in this great Hall. On some issues, views have differed. On others, consensus has been reached. That is not surprising. Neither is it a problem. Instead, it shows that the United Nations is a relevant, vibrant body for debate on the issues that concern all of us today. That is exactly the United Nations we need and want.

Later tonight, this High-level Meeting will close, but our work is only just beginning. After the words have been spoken comes the time for deeds. The momentum created in this Hall must be maintained for the months and years ahead. I urge all political leaders to remain personally committed in order to ensure that the decisions we have taken tonight will turn into reality. This summit should be seen as a starting point for the reform process. I can assure you of my own personal commitment as well as that of Sweden and of course that of Ambassador Jan Eliasson to this cause, in his capacity as President of the General Assembly.

Let us join forces in making the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations a year of change. We owe it to our citizens. We owe it to coming generations. We owe it to ourselves.

We shall now continue with the remaining speakers for the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, delivered on his behalf by His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to read out a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Amre Moussa.

> "I should like first to express my appreciation to Mr. Jean Ping, President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for his tireless efforts to prepare the draft summit outcome document (A/60/L.1). It is a document that awakens hopes and provides for reform in accordance with current international interests and international consensus. In any case, it is a starting point, although it does not meet all the expectations of a world yearning for stability, progress, justice and peace.
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> "I also want to welcome Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that this able Swedish diplomat will lead the deliberations of this historic session to complete success.
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> "This is not the first time that I am addressing the General Assembly, having already had the honour of doing so on a number of occasions, most recently at the Millennium Summit, which proposed a global plan of action for a more just and more equitable world. But this is the first time that I am addressing the Assembly as Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.
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> "It is very significant that our gathering today coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations and the sixtieth anniversary of the League of Arab States: 60 years of coordination and cooperation between the greatest of international organizations and the oldest regional organization; 60 years of creative interaction during which we have experienced together the same events and met the same challenges and have worked together to make this international Organization one that works towards new prospects of freedom and prosperity without exclusion or discrimination.
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> "The draft outcome document emphasizes the need to reach agreement on collective

solutions to major issues related to stability in the world, especially in the areas of development, peace, collective security, human rights, the rule of law and the strengthening of the United Nations. This is a commitment on the part of us all, States and regional and international organizations alike.

"That is why the commitment of the League of Arab States within this framework is a legal and moral commitment which I reiterate before the Assembly. I pledge to work towards the attainment of that objective and to ensure that my regional organization truly contributes to it.

"When the Secretary-General appeals to all leaders of the world to support and implement the reform programme, as he did in this Hall, the League of Arab States, as a regional organization dedicated to promoting collective development and political action, understands the value of collective endeavour and commitments in this context.

"The content of the draft outcome document regarding the role of regional organizations and the strengthening of that role in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter opens new prospects for collective endeavour at the regional and international levels to make the reform agenda successful, thereby ushering in a better future for humankind.

"I should like to raise a few points that we hope will have an effect on our working procedures, with a view to the implementation of the contents of this historic document.

"The first point is that the reform to which we all fervently aspire must be a real practical reform — a comprehensive reform — that is aimed at regulating relations among nations in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter. I have no doubt that reform is of consensual interest to all of us, just as I have no doubt that we all agree that the concept of democracy is our principal objective.

"But I believe that national and international policy reform are two sides of the same coin. Democratic international relations are the underpinning of democratic national policies; that means that the United Nations must have a leadership role in democratic practice among nations, which requires support for the proposed reforms, as contained in the outcome document and stressed by the Secretary-General.

"That is why the role and position of the General Assembly is vital. The General Assembly is from any democratic perspective the legislative body *par excellence* in this Organization — hence the United Nations must ensure follow-up of all the other subsidiary bodies that may be created in future.

"The second point I should like to make is that the reform we want for the United Nations is the result of a historic process to which the Third World has contributed in terms of demands and positions. This has been made concrete in collective responsibility and in the reaffirmation of multilateral diplomacy and the need to work by consensus on all aspects relating to the future of our world.

"I believe that the collective negotiations that have led to this document contain a clear message, and that is that the world needs to be guided collectively so that the international community can commit itself to implementing all the recommendations made and decisions taken.

"What we seek today is a commitment based on conviction not on pressure, coercion or assumptions. This is closely related to the credibility crisis prevailing with respect to the United Nations. We all agree that we cannot resolve international crises if reform does not reflect the will of the international community, as expressed through negotiation and consensus.

"This brings me to my third point, which is that the desired reform must be comprehensive and integrated. To reform some aspects without reforming others can only lead to an imbalance in our system's structure and performance. This is something that we have long known, and we have worked towards comprehensive reform within the League of Arab States: reform of its instruments and its working methods, the creation of new institutions such as the Arab Parliament, which reflects relations among peoples and which allows civil society to participate fully and effectively. I mention this model because I am convinced that reform of the United Nations and

of regional organizations must be consistent. Reform of one goes hand in hand with reform of others, and regional organizations can provide real support to the United Nations in its endeavours to maintain international peace and security and to achieve economic and social development worldwide. That is clearly reflected in recent resolutions adopted by the Arab States.

"I am certain that we all agree that reform, any reform, is an ongoing, indivisible process. The eradication of poverty cannot be achieved without sustainable development; development cannot be achieved without security; and security cannot be achieved if we do not struggle against terrorism, violence, war and foreign occupation. The eradication of all of those scourges can be achieved only through the rule of law, and this, in turn, can be accomplished only in the framework of a just and equitable international system.

"I believe that, with this document, we are making progress in that direction. That is the very philosophy of the Charter — a philosophy that must be preserved, just as we must safeguard the Charter itself and its principles, which relate to the very future and progress of nations and peoples.

"The Arab delegations to the United Nations made a constructive contribution to the final document because they are aware of the major challenges that we are confronting and because they want the Organization to be preserved and reformed in order to ensure an effective and equitable international system. Real and balanced reform of the United Nations must be a principal step in the reform of the entire international system, and I am certain that reform, in the broader sense, is a requirement, not just an option."

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, member of the European Commission.

Ms. Ferrero-Waldner (European Commission): Standing here, facing this great Hall, brings back happy memories of my previous work here. But today I am speaking in my current capacity as European Commissioner for External relations, and, from this vantage point, on behalf of the European community, I welcome the promising results of this meeting.

President Ping and his team have been untiring in pushing for this worthwhile outcome, and none of it would have been possible without Secretary-General Kofi Annan's leadership and vision. The European community is happy that we were able, together with many others, to contribute to that outcome.

How do we now see the results? Do they meet our original aspirations? Not everything has been attained. Compromises were inevitable, but we have laid a solid foundation as we seek to rebuild the United Nations so as to enable it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Development, security and human rights are indeed the three pillars of our common vision of the future. But how do we measure up against that vision? When it comes to development assistance, the European Union leads the world. From the outset, we have led the efforts to increase this assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national income by 2015. We have set for ourselves an intermediate goal of 0.56 per cent by 2010. We very much hope to see other donors follow our lead and to see our partner countries, with our support, make a serious effort to reinforce good governance.

Trade is also key to development. The European community remains firmly committed to making a success of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, including by the elimination of expert subsidies.

Our serious offer made earlier this year still stands. We hope that others will follow with similar commitments on export as well as domestic subsidies. The European Community's "Everything But Arms" initiative has been in place for more than three years, and it is time that others follow. The European Community this summer pledged to increase our assistance for trade capacity-building still further to €1 billion a year.

Even in the wake of Katrina and the tsunami, we have not focused enough attention on the environment. Climate change and environmental sustainability have to be taken as seriously as they deserve. In that perspective, will it be enough to just explore the potential of the current institutional set-up? We believe that we should continue to work towards creating a strong, functional, action-oriented United Nations environmental organization.

Let me say that the European Community welcomes and strongly supports the initiative of President Bush concerning the looming danger of avian flu's becoming a pandemic.

Agreeing on a peacebuilding commission is without doubt one key result in the area of peace and security. We must now ensure that it begins its work by the end of this year. The European Community has long-standing experience in helping to stabilize countries emerging from conflicts in all possible corners of the world — from the Balkans to Indonesia, from Afghanistan to Africa. We look forward to taking an appropriate place at the table, side by side with other key institutional donors.

Another important outcome is our recognition of our collective responsibility to protect populations against atrocities. I have always strongly advocated that people must be at the heart of security concerns. The United Nations credibility is therefore much reinforced by adopting that concept.

Human rights are universal, and putting them on the same level as development, peace and security underscores that fact. The Commission on Human Rights has lost its ability to act effectively on behalf of victims, and thus its credibility. Forming a new, smaller and more functional human rights council will help the United Nations become a real driving force behind human rights protection. I confess being disappointed at the meagre outcome in the summit document, which does not meet our ambitions. Let us not lose the momentum, therefore, and let us finish this important chapter by February 2006. I express our full confidence in President Eliasson's leadership to fulfil that mandate before us.

Finally, let me say a word on United Nations management reform, where we also have not come as far as we would have liked. The Secretary-General shoulders an awesome responsibility, yet it is not always clear that he has the necessary authority over the administration to deliver.

Effective multilateralism is the hallmark of the European Union's external policy. The United Nations system is its cornerstone. Let me pledge today that we will do everything in our power to ensure that the United Nations will be a lean, fit and energetic Organization for the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembl will now hear an address by His Excellenc Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of th Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Ihsanoglu (Organization of the Islami Conference): It gives me great pleasure to address thi Assembly on behalf of the Organization of the Islami Conference (OIC) as the General Assembly, five year after the adoption of the Millennium Declaratio pauses to review the state of affairs of the world i general, and the achievements realized i implementing the Millennium Development Goals i particular.

Today, five years after the Millennium Summi many developing countries perceive that the politica will to forge ahead in implementing what was agree upon is not vigorous. Looking at that matter from th Muslim world's vantage point, and despite our sincer intentions to take comfort from the promisin objectives enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, w in the Muslim world are still awaiting and hoping t see a better world.

Despite the prevalence of the lofty principles o respect for human rights and the supremacy of the rul of law, international law and international humanitaria law, and at a time when the issues of people's right t self-determination have almost been settled, th Muslim world finds itself still exposed to numerou injustices, violations of rights and campaigns o defamation.

At the same time, we are fully aware of the fa that the OIC member States should do more in th process of implementing the Millennium Developme Goals. I would like to emphasize that defamatio campaigns are still being waged and have eve intensified against Muslims and Islam itself. Th growing phenomenon of Islamophobia is the be example of that trend. We hope that the idea o transforming the present Commission on Huma Rights into a human rights council will help to upho our rights.

In the face of that situation, we in the OIC a making every effort to deal with that reality in th interests of global harmony and peace. The leaders the Muslim world will hold an extraordinary summit Mecca to consider the situation. The OIC gener secretariat is also pursuing a process of overhauling th organization, rewriting its charter and objectives wi

the aim of bringing its activities into the mainstream of the concerns of the international community, especially in the field of social development, and contributing to international cooperation with concrete projects.

Representing 57 Muslim countries and the Islamic world at large, the OIC rejects and condemns violence and terrorism. We note, however, that the global war on terrorism has yielded no convincing results because it has focused mainly on military means. What is needed, we believe, is to address the root causes of terrorism, using the art of persuasion through local approaches while resorting to diplomacy and financial and economic measures, and encouraging moderate trends.

I would like here to emphasize, in that regard, that the sanctity of life is one of the paramount values of Islam and that terrorism is a heretical deviation from our religion. We believe that the frequent placing of the epithet "Islamic" before "terrorism" is a sacrilege. Moreover, it is highly dangerous. We should be careful not to create a perception that might lead to bitter enmity, based on religious grounds, between hundreds of millions of people.

Muslims around the world have never been under such pressure and intensive scrutiny. What we need is a concerted effort to quell that phenomenon through greater understanding and in an open, critical and transcultural dialogue among all civilizations. On the other hand, we share the view of the many who are calling for the democratization of the United Nations system, and especially the composition of the membership of the Security Council. The United Nations reforms should take into consideration the representation of the Muslim world and the realities of the contemporary world.

The OIC member States have endorsed the eight Millennium Development Goals that are to be achieved by 2015. We hope that we will be able to meet this target. We also support the idea of repositioning the Economic and Social Council in order to enhance its effectiveness in dealing with the new challenges of economic and social development in the world, thus ushering in an era of greater social justice and a more democratic world order.

In conclusion, at a moment when our world stands at the crossroads of a promising future, or a threatened one, let us not miss the opportunity being offered by this high-level forum of nations of striving to save humanity from the ravages of poverty, illiteracy and social disintegration. Let future generations remember this moment as a time when world leaders rose to the occasion to lay the foundation for a healthy and progressive global village; this remains our destination in the new millennium. In achieving this goal, I pledge the fullest cooperation and partnership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the times ahead.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), who will speak on behalf of the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Johnsson (Inter-Parliamentary Union): The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Senator Sergio Paez Verdugo, regrets very much that pressing political engagements in his country, Chile, prevent him from being with you today. At his request, I therefore have the honour to report on the outcome of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments.

During three days last week, more than 150 speakers of parliaments met in this very Hall to discuss the growing role of parliaments in the work of the United Nations. They came with the intention of galvanizing that role into a new strategic partnership between the United Nations and parliaments and pledged to build political momentum for reform of the United Nations.

We have made available copies of the declaration adopted by the speakers at the close of their proceedings, the result of a long and careful process that included extensive consultations with parliaments around the world. The document is short and to the point, built around a single, focused message, which is that parliaments have an essential role to play to bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

The declaration takes up the subject of United Nations reform. The text does not mince words. Parliamentarians want to see the reform proposals debated, and they want to see their Governments acting on them now, not in five or ten years from now. They want reform, and they want it to be comprehensive. Reforms must recognize the intrinsic link between democracy, security, development and human rights.

The declaration calls for change and political action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to identify additional financial resources for development. It also calls for the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty on terrorism, with a clear definition of terrorism, and real advances in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues. Frankly speaking, the stakes are too high for the present impasse to be allowed to continue. The text also reaffirms that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential for development, peace and security.

The Speakers of Parliament want to see a stronger United Nations. They call on States, including their parliaments, to demonstrate leadership and political will to provide the United Nations with more efficient mechanisms, appropriate human and financial resources and real management reform.

Over the past year, stimulated by the Cardoso Panel's report (A/58/817), many parliaments have discussed how best to organize cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations. The conclusions of those debates are also reflected in the declaration. It affirms that parliaments in all countries have a constitutional role to represent the will of the people and, on their behalf, adopt laws, including the national budgets and overseeing the Government. This responsibility is carried out at home, but it includes a responsibility to follow closely the multitude of international negotiations that take place in multilateral forums.

Parliaments want to make sure that they are well informed of those negotiations, that they have an opportunity to debate what is being negotiated, that they can question ministers and influence the negotiating positions they are advancing on behalf of their people. And, once negotiations have concluded, it is for the parliaments to ratify agreements and see to their implementation. This involves amending or adopting legislation, voting on budgets and, of course, holding Governments to account as far as implementation is concerned.

The declaration adds that parliaments should increase their international work in partnership with the IPU, which they consider to be a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations. The Speakers of Parliament are not in support of the creation of new parliamentary assemblies at the United Nations or elsewhere. Rather, they want the IPU to mobilize expertise, which exists in parliamentary standing and select committees, and to work on issues on the international agenda. They want the IPU to facilitate the provision of more and better information to national parliaments on the activities of the United Nations. They want us to stage more parliamentary hearings and specialized meetings at the United Nations, and they want us to stimulate and cooperate more closely with official regional parliamentary assemblies and organizations.

Acting in this manner, parliaments and the IPU seek to strengthen the United Nations, assist in implementing decisions taken there and hold it accountable to the people it serves throughout the world. All of this represents a large agenda for parliaments and for the IPU.

The Speakers came to New York with a commitment from their respective parliaments to put it into effect. They are now turning to participants in this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, to seek their commitment and support for turning this agenda into a reality, including by making it possible for all members of parliaments to come to New York for meetings we organize at the United Nations.

In conclusion, the principle that problems must be solved through dialogue represents the cornerstone of both democracy and the United Nations. The Speakers of Parliament invite the Assembly to build on that foundation to construct a strategic partnership between the United Nations and parliaments, through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Zhang Deguang, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Mr. Zhang Deguang (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Assembly. This is the first time that a representative of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has spoken from this rostrum. Allow me, on behalf of all the member States and observer States of the SCO, to extend our warmest congratulations on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I hope that this High-level Meeting will achieve many fruitful results.

Since its creation, the United Nations has been working to fulfil humankind's most cherished dream — namely, that the tragedy of war should never be repeated and that the sun of peace could always shine on the world. On numerous occasions in the past the Assembly has heard strong appeals and genuine calls for peace from many countries. This Hall has been the scene of great efforts and outstanding contributions by the United Nations to the cause of safeguarding peace.

Tremendous changes have taken place in today's world; humankind has left behind an era of war and peace and has entered a new era of peace and development. Nevertheless, the United Nations continues to play an irreplaceable role in international affairs today. The fundamental principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter remain an indisputable cornerstone of modern international relations. Upholding the central role and the authority of the United Nations remains a common responsibility and mission of the international community.

It goes without saying that the United Nations also needs to carry out rational and necessary reforms in order to respond more effectively to the new situations, challenges and threats of the globalized world, and to more effectively accomplish the difficult task of promoting world peace and development. In reforming the United Nations, we must respect the principle of achieving broad consensus. No timetable should be set for United Nations reform. And no vote should be forced on controversial draft resolutions.

Compared to the 60-year history of the United Nations, the history of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has just begun. Four years ago in the city of Shanghai, the leaders of Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan announced the birth of this new organization of regional cooperation.

The SCO is committed to strengthening good-neighbourly relations, mutual trust and friendship among its member States; enhancing member States' cooperation on the economy, trade, transport, energy, tourism, environmental protection and humanitarian affairs; combating terrorism, separatism and extremism; safeguarding peace, security and stability in the region; and promoting the creation of a democratic, just and rational international political and economic order. Internally, the SCO is guided by the spirit of Shanghai, based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for the diversity of cultures and the aspiration of joint development. Externally, the SCO observes the principles of openness and non-alignment and stands against the targeting of other States and regions.

Within a short period of several years, the SCO has basically completed its work on mechanism-building and has achieved noticeable progress in various fields and on establishing external ties. A recent summit in Astana outlined strategic plans for the SCO's further development. And, following the admission of Mongolia as an observer State of the SCO, Pakistan, Iran and India were accepted as new observers. We are pleased to note that the purposes and the principles of the SCO have received broad recognition and that the SCO is now moving towards its fifth anniversary with confidence and determination.

In December 2004, the SCO was granted observer status at the General Assembly. That signalled a good start in establishing our cooperation with the United Nations. The SCO has already established close ties and cooperative relations with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies. The SCO has also signed memorandums of understanding with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States. We are ready to expand our cooperative ties with more international organizations in order to make a joint contribution to peace and development in our region and in the world.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization represents an area which has a population of nearly 1.5 billion people and covers three fifths of the Eurasian continent. We are very aware of our responsibilities, and we are ready to carry out that historic mission with great courage.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now call on Mr. Achim Steiner, Director General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Steiner (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): Before I begin my prepared remarks, I would like to express my delegation's sympathies to the Government and the people of the United States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The worldwide outpouring of sympathy and support following both the tsunami and now Hurricane

Katrina demonstrated the united voice of humanity and indeed serves as a reminder and a sign of solidarity with so many people who have died in recent months as a result of natural disasters.

Five years ago, in this very Hall, the assembled world leaders adopted an ambitious set of targets and goals to promote peace and prosperity. Five years later, we must acknowledge that the pace of progress towards meeting those goals is too slow. We must redouble our efforts and refocus our approaches.

The report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom", the foundation for our deliberations here today, boldly declares that

> "We fundamentally depend on natural systems and resources for our existence and development. Our efforts to defeat poverty and pursue sustainable development will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural resource depletion continue unabated." (*A/59/2005, para. 57*)

That bold declaration is supported by the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a comprehensive assessment of the state of the planet's ecosystems by nearly 1,400 leading experts from 95 countries. It finds that

> "The loss of services derived from ecosystems is a significant barrier to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty, hunger, and disease." (*Living Beyond Our Means, p. 2*)

That stark message was echoed by the Millennium Project, which declared that integrating the principles and practices of environmental sustainability into country policies and planning programmes is therefore key to successful poverty reduction strategies.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources — the World Conservation Union — welcomes the outcome document for its comprehensive treatment of nearly all the major issues currently on the multilateral agenda. Yet, like many who have spoken before me, we are disappointed that it could not go further.

On the one hand, the outcome document reaffirms the essential importance of sustainable development as part of the overarching framework for the United Nations, and it addresses the crucial role of conservation, sustainable development and the management of natural resources in eradicating poverty and in achieving the other Millennium Development Goals.

However, on the other hand, the outcome document fails to appreciate how much we still have to do to achieve environmental sustainability and, indeed, all the other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Fifteen of the 24 essential services provided by the ecosystems we have at our disposal — ranging from food production to water quality and availability, disease management and climate regulation — are being used unsustainably and are persistently eroded.

This situation requires an urgent response. We must ensure that the United Nations, civil society and the private sector nurture and maintain the environmental foundation of sustainable livelihoods.

Allow me to note that in some ways it is a shame that civil society and the private sector could not take part in this summit in a more active way and that they have been reduced to holding events in hotels and on the street around the summit, because their role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are so central to the objectives of the United Nations.

Rather than being a tax on development, investing in environmental sustainability should be seen as an effective and efficient means to achieve development. To cite just one example, replacing the traditional biomass fuels used by the poor yields multiple benefits in terms of time savings for women and children, improved health through reduced indoor air pollution, reduced environmental damage from the cutting of fuel wood and improved soil quality. This may seem a simple technological issue, but it affects many more than 2 billion people on our planet every day.

For our part, the World Conservation Union will continue to support the multilateral process with all our energy and will therefore support the Millennium Development Goals by bringing the best knowledge and science available to decision-making today.

We also pledge to work with the Poverty-Environment Partnership and our 1,072 government and non-government members in the World Conservation Union to make conservation work more effectively for the poor. This week, we announced our Conservation for Poverty Reduction initiative, a $300 million plan of worldwide action with more than 100

partner organizations, which will target, along with conservation, improved livelihood security for 50 million people in 20 countries.

This initiative is only one more stride and one more contribution in the race to achieve the MDGs by 2015, to eradicate poverty and to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

When we refer to the environment, we should remember that we are not talking about one sector. When we refer to the environment, we should note that it means tourism. When we refer to the environment, we mean agriculture. When we refer to the environment, we mean fisheries — and energy, and forestry, and health and water and sanitation, to mention just some examples of what the environment really stands for. People are the target of the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to make poverty history, we need to make the environment the future.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call on Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Davis (Council of Europe): I shall abbreviate my statement in view of the lateness of the hour.

I stand before the General Assembly as the Secretary General of the Council of Europe — an intergovernmental organization of 46 member States. We have been working with the United Nations for more than half a century, as partners in promoting peace and justice. The United Nations and the Council of Europe share the same goals. The ideals, values and principles of the Council of Europe are those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That is why the heads of State or Government of the 46 States members of the Council of Europe, at our Summit in May, encouraged the Council of Europe to step up cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law figure prominently in the Declaration to be adopted at this High-level Plenary Meeting. They are also at the heart of the mission of the Council of Europe. Our European Convention on Human Rights, which is directly and expressly derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, remains one of the foremost examples of the implementation of that Declaration's values at the regional level.

The relationship between the Council of Europe and the United Nations is not restricted to words. There is also practical cooperation in many areas involving human rights, including the battles against terrorism, torture, trafficking in human beings, racism and violence against children and women.

One threat to human rights is terrorism; the people of New York know it well. Europe, too, has suffered from appalling atrocities over the past two years in Russia, Turkey, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Terrorism seeks to destroy our way of life and to undermine freedom, democracy and the rule of law. It is unjustifiable under any circumstances and in any culture. We must resolutely defend those values and rights, on which both the United Nations and the Council of Europe were founded, and we must also make sure that measures taken by Governments do not curtail those same values and rights. That is why we must continue our efforts to prevent torture and preserve freedom of expression and information.

I welcome the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council to work with regional organizations in the struggle against terrorism. I also welcome the decision to establish a Human Rights Council, and I hope that it will retain the positive features of the current system and that it will also work closely with regional organizations.

Winston Churchill put it well in a speech in 1948. When referring to a future Council of Europe and its relationship with the United Nations, he called for "regional councils, august but subordinate", which would be the "pillars upon which the world organization would be founded in majesty and calm". Nearly 60 years later, I am not sure the Council of Europe can be described as august or that the United Nations can be described as majestic and calm, but I do believe that the strengthened relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, advocated in the Declaration to be adopted at this world summit, is a step in the right direction.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call on Ms. Florence Mugasha, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Ms. Mugasha (Commonwealth Secretariat): the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, The Right Honourable Don McKinnon, regrets that he

is unable to deliver this statement in person, due to another pressing engagement. He has therefore asked me, as his deputy, to deliver his speech, which reads as follows.

"I was privileged to speak in this Hall five years ago when world leaders agreed on the Millennium Declaration — a vision for a fairer, safer and more prosperous world. I am honoured to speak today on the same subject, once again on behalf of the 53 nations of the Commonwealth.

"One of the great things about meeting here in New York City is that we see what can be achieved through prosperity and technological advances: going into space; sending information, pictures and even money around the world in milliseconds; finding cures for age-old maladies.

"Here in New York, as in many other dynamic cities throughout the world, we can also glimpse on the horizon what growth and prosperity could offer in the future. But we must contrast that with what we also see in many countries day after day. We see children who we know will never see the inside of a classroom, and young and old people who will die of dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis and other curable diseases. For most, drinking water is a diminishing resource that is either unaffordable or simply unavailable. We see people condemned to inferior status because of their gender or religion or the colour of their skin, or simply because they happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Members will have heard many statistics over the past three days. The picture is a sombre one, and we are all affected. Our limited success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after five years should, above all, shock into action those of us here who can do more. Those with the means must be more committed and more generous to those in the statistical spotlight.

"This year, the Group-of-Eight countries have pledged increased aid and debt cancellation for low-income countries. I applaud those initiatives. The test, as always, is 'delivery, delivery, delivery' — ensuring that the funds made available are spent with wisdom, responsibility, accountability and effectiveness. In the Commonwealth, 11 of our 53 members have already recorded significant progress on the MDGs, but 31 have made slow progress, and some are actually going backwards. The Commonwealth will have to redouble its efforts to achieve the MDGs, and it will do so.

"We will help to build or rebuild those democratic institutions which we know go hand in hand with stable and prosperous societies. We will continue our work on issues relating to small States, international trade, . gender and sustainability, using official and civil society networks and partnerships. That is the Commonwealth way.

"This year marks 60 years of the United Nations. This institution embodies mankind's collective will to live and progress together in a collaborative way and in a community of nations. Multilateralism is the only way in which common problems can be solved in a substantive way and in which the future can be secured for all of us. Global challenges require global responses.

"My colleague, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has placed before Governments a wide-ranging series of proposals to move the United Nations forward as an institution and to promote the priority global issues with which it deals. I especially welcome the proposed strengthening of the United Nations work in the areas of peace-building, human rights and anti-terrorism, as well as the special attention it devotes to development and democracy.

"Development can no longer be thought of simply in terms of gross domestic product. Development is about possibilities first and production second. It is about touching the lives of everyone.

"Democracy, too, is about expanding opportunities and strengthening human capabilities. Only if democracy and development live in the hearts of the people of a country and have real meaning for them, will that country's institutions work as they should and sustainable prosperity be realized.

"With the requisite will, partnerships and resources, it is not too late to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015.

The political will was there in 2000. There is therefore no excuse not to recommit to the MDGs this week, to make the necessary pledges and to say, 'We will do it'. The Commonwealth will continue to play its part."

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now call on Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda, President of the Asian Development Bank.

Mr. Kuroda (Asian Development Bank): We stand today at a crossroads of great opportunity and great uncertainty. The actions that follow this pivotal United Nations summit will determine whether the world achieves the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). With two thirds of the world's poor residing in Asia and the Pacific, it is clear that the region holds the key to solving the global poverty challenge. No other developing region of the world has been more successful in creating economic growth and alleviating absolute poverty. But achieving all the MDGs by 2015 will still require massive investment, given the scale of deprivation in Asia and the Pacific. The region has more people with inadequate nutrition, more living in slum conditions and more without access to water and sanitation than any other region of the world. However, the MDGs can be achieved, provided efforts are intensified considerably.

Sustained, rapid and broad-based growth is fundamental to our task. But growth will not be sustained unless it is inclusive. This will require more resources for basic services, as well as ensuring that women, indigenous peoples and the poor are not left out. Growth will not be sustained if we neglect the environment. The same extraordinary growth that has lifted millions up from poverty in our region now threatens millions more as environments become degraded, pollution increases and people migrate to overcrowded towns and cities. Sound policies are needed to reverse those problems. Growth will also not be sustained if Asia's huge needs for investment in infrastructure, technology and human capital remain unmet. Clearly, we need greater private-sector participation. For this, laws and institutions that protect property rights, encourage openness, improve financial governance and strengthen capital markets are needed. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has placed its resources and advisory services behind that agenda.

Increasingly, the economic integration of the Asia and Pacific region is becoming an imperative for its growth and development. Regional initiatives have enhanced connectivity through infrastructure and reduced poverty and barriers to trade and investment. Intraregional trade has increased and financial and monetary cooperation has intensified. Continued progress in these areas will increase the region's resilience and growth potential. Regional cooperation must also be expanded to directly impact the MDGs in such areas as environmental degradation, communicable diseases and the migration of workers.

The task before us is urgent and imminent. The ADB is committed to fighting poverty. We will do so in partnership with others. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness provides an excellent framework for developing and deepening cooperation. We also value very highly our partnership with United Nations agencies. We recently released a regional MDG report that was jointly authored by the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Asian Development Bank.

The prerequisites I have outlined are fully consistent with the desires and commitments of Asia and the Pacific. The momentum that has been generated must be translated into action in the years remaining before 2015. We hope that this summit's outcome will trace a clear road map towards that end.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank.

Mr. Kaberuka (African Development Bank): I am honoured to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly in the name of the African Development Bank, whose presidency I assumed this month.

The African Development Bank welcomes the outcome of this special gathering, which is an opportunity for the international community to review the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to assess the extra push that is needed. It has been a unique opportunity for both developing countries and their partners to rededicate for the achievement of the MDGs with renewed optimism and vigour.

The leaders who have preceded me in this historic Hall have articulated issues surrounding the greatest challenges of our time. There is unanimity on the

situation. Many regions in the developing world are making satisfactory progress in eliminating poverty and achieving the MDGs. The major challenge now is mainly to assist the African continent and, of course, other relevant low-income countries, to accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

As Africa's leading development financing institution, we welcome the commitments made over the last two days, coming so soon after the decision of the G-8 at Gleneagles on official development assistance (ODA), debt and trade. The prospects for achieving the MDGs in Africa have improved considerably in recent years. Conflicts are waning in much of the continent, thanks to the efforts of the African Union. Democratic reforms and significant improvements in systems of governance are taking root in more and more of our countries. An increasing number of our countries are implementing sound macroeconomic policies.

At the regional level, the NEPAD initiative is not only advancing regional cooperation and integration, it is also promoting the principles of democracy, good governance and sound economic policies through the African Peer Review Mechanism.

We believe that an unprecedented window of opportunity exists today. However, we have in the past too often fallen short of our own pledges, which have been made but not fully delivered on, or scaled down over time. It is imperative this time that we ensure the full implementation of our pledges, as we must implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. We, like everyone here, have expressed the hope and determination that the Doha round to be held in December in Hong Kong will be a success, particularly with respect to the removal of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and tariff and non-tariff barriers.

In their determination to overcome the challenges of development, the African founding fathers established the African Development Bank 40 years ago. To date, the Bank has provided considerable resources and technical assistance to support the efforts of its regional member countries.

In the context of NEPAD, Africa's leaders and the international donor community have identified the Bank as a privileged partner in the new initiatives to support Africa. The Bank is repositioning itself towards that end.

We have noted that the outcome document of this conference calls for a greater role for the African Development Bank, to enable it, inter alia, to play a key part in efforts to close the infrastructure gap. We are prepared to do so and are building up our capacities and partnerships with others to play that role. It is self-evident that the MDGs will be that much harder to attain as long as Africa's infrastructure gap is not closed.

We will work with other institutions to establish a concrete framework to deliver on the G-8 initiative on debt. For us, the key issue is that of additionality and of strengthening the long-term capacity of the African Development Bank to finance the development of its member countries.

In that context, we look forward to the initiative's being extended to cover also the debts owed to the African Development Bank window and to other members of the Bank Group, which are often referred to as middle-income countries. Many of them have large pockets of poverty, and some are large economies with very significant neighbourhood effects. What happens in those countries is important for Africa's attainment of the MDGs.

We are intensifying our capacity to support countries in post-conflict situations as well as the so-called fragile States. We are convinced that Africa's dependence on aid will diminish as growth prospects improve. Dependence will decline as the international trade regime improves. That is why the success of the Hong Kong meeting is of such critical importance to us.

As I come to the end of my statement, allow me to mention an issue of concern which was not foreseen in the year 2000 but which has now become so crucial it must be addressed. As we meet here today, the dramatic increase in oil prices is threatening to roll back growth possibilities in many African nations, worsening their internal and external imbalances. It is no longer a short-term external shock; it is having an impact on growth, inflation, the balance of payments and public expenditure to fight poverty in a lasting way. It is imperative that the international community bear in mind this factor, which was not so acute when we adopted the MDGs in the year 2000. We must attempt to identify and put in place a suitable response that can protect African countries' achievements and preserve them in future. For our part, we will work

with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to determine how we can best provide the requisite level of support to those countries, with a view to safeguarding prospects of attaining the MDGs.

As this unique summit ends, we are encouraged by its outcome. It did not provide everything we would have liked to see, but it is a way forward. The African Development Bank stands ready to play its role in this common fight for humanity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I give the floor to Mr. Guy Rider, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Mr. Ryder (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions): I speak this evening for the 145 million working men and women united in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and also on behalf of the World Confederation of Labour. I speak also as one of the spokespersons here for the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), of which the ICFTU is a founding member.

But, given that I and my fellow representatives of civil society are speaking after the adoption of the summit's final outcome document, I have to say that it would be unfortunate indeed if civil society, which has contributed so energetically to this endeavour, were to be perceived as no more than an afterthought in its proceedings.

Poverty and hunger remain the lot of billions of people worldwide, a situation which is unconscionable and unsustainable. This is the time for Member States to show vision and leadership and the capacity to work together to implement the commitments they have made at the major United Nations conferences and global summits of recent years.

Political leaders must recognize and must act upon the need to foster global solidarity in order to advance commonly shared global objectives and lend full support to the achievement of national development priorities.

We therefore reiterate the call of the GCAP: Wake up to poverty. Urgent solutions must be found. The right policy choices to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are possible; they are within our reach; and they must be adopted so that the situation can be turned around and a virtuous circle of growth with equity brought about.

First and foremost, we need an enabling global policy environment, as called for by MDG 8, and by that I mean, of course, fair trade, more and better aid, debt cancellation and debt relief, and a new, strong social dimension to the policies of the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We need effective national-level policies with a focus on pro-poor, gender-sensitive growth strategies, on participation of civil society, including trade unions, and on respect for workers' rights and human rights in general. Globally and nationally, we need a strong focus on a decent work agenda as the most significant way out of poverty, as was called for by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Decent work carried out in respect for fundamental workers' rights provides the empowerment that women and men need to improve their living standards and to participate in decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods and, ultimately, to work their way out of, and escape from, poverty.

The United Nations system, including the ILO, with its body of norms, provides the social pillar of the multilateral system as the anchor for establishing policy coherence, and it must be strengthened, not weakened. Therefore, the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report to enhance United Nations effectiveness through a revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and of the Security Council, a new Human Rights Council and a new Peacebuilding Commission, and other proposals require and deserve the support of all Member States.

Tough as negotiations can be on these issues, they simply cannot be shelved. The process is much too important to be dropped now. So those parts of the reform agenda that have not been agreed in the outcome document of this summit should be the subject of further discussion during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, and they should be negotiated in good faith, with a view to achieving win-win outcomes for the benefit of the peoples of the planet.

Through these and all the issues raised in his report entitled "In larger freedom", the Secretary-General reminds us of our responsibilities — today, global responsibilities — to stand together against poverty and exclusion and against arms spending, and,

instead, to stand together for peacebuilding and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. And as we weigh today the urgent need to act on these critical challenges of the twenty-first century, let us ponder also the dire consequences of inaction: a world no longer secure and fit to pass on to our children. At this time of deep insecurity and conflict in the world, we should recall that social justice remains the surest guarantee of universal and lasting peace.

Joining together to achieve that justice is our best contribution to making sure that we and our children can live in a world free from poverty, desperation and conflict in future years. The United Nations has known its greatest successes and won its lasting authority from those occasions when its Member States have risen above narrow self-interests to the uplands from which the vision of a better common future becomes clear. The peoples of the United Nations are watching to see how their leaders have met their responsibilities at this summit and how they have honoured solemn commitments already made. And, as is proper, that scrutiny will continue in the future.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Let me say that I very much appreciate those comments. They will be made known to the full membership; I hope that I will be able to make some brief comments at the end, which I hope will be relevant to all.

The Assembly will now hear an address by Mrs. Virginia Vargas, Founding Director and Executive Board Member of the Flora Tristan Centre for Peruvian Women.

Mrs. Vargas (Flora Tristan Centre for Peruvian Women) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before beginning, I wish to protest about the way in which the outcome document was adopted, the way in which the list of speakers was changed and the anti-democratic way in which civil society has been left out of this summit. As an activist in world civil society I would echo the insistent and disenchanted voices of world social movements who say to the heads of State who are or were present at this Meeting that the world as it is now is ethically unacceptable, politically devastating and economically and environmentally unsustainable. Those movements affirm, as we have affirmed in the World Social Forum, that other worlds are possible, but to achieve this, radical change is required, change which places men and women at the centre of development. Those movements wish to say to this General Assembly that it is missing a historic opportunity to shoulder its responsibilities and keep its promises to create a more just world, that its lack of commitment to the mission of the United Nations is keeping the Organization from being an Organization of "We the peoples", and that urgent changes required by the world can be possible only through the dismantling of unjust, anti-democratic world forces, maintained by powerful countries and their allies, namely neo-liberalism, militarism and fundamentalism of every kind.

A life free from want is possible only if we alter the development mindset which puts economic growth before human development. In a world where the production of wealth is enormous and at the same time poverty and exclusion have increased dramatically, the central problem is tremendous inequity in the distribution of wealth. This situation is legitimized by an unjust international order that favours the most powerful. Where are the new instruments of accountability and global taxation on multilateral corporations? How long will the treatment of deadly diseases such as AIDS continue to be secondary to the earnings of transnational companies, and where, finally, are the democratic proposals to deal with indecent and immoral debt, paid for many times over? That debt is ethically unrecoverable for the peoples of the world.

A life without fear will not be possible while political power is allied with the economic power of the arms producers. This alliance lacks the legitimacy to decide whether a situation is an imminent threat or a potential danger. It in itself is a threat and a danger because it resorts to lies and to arbitrary unilateralism to feed its constant need for war. We require disarmament not be gradual and selective, we need general disarmament. We need a change in the way in which conflicts are resolved. We need also to address other causes of fear. A life without fear is built when we confront violence against women in all spheres and when we confront racism, recognizing the rights and autonomy of indigenous peoples. It is built by affirming the rights of social movements such as women's movements, which contribute to the peace agenda. It is built by respecting international agreements, which are a global ethical responsibility. Governments reluctant to sign the Kyoto Protocol today have a responsibility for the disaster and suffering caused by Hurricane Katrina. Governments

who claim impunity with respect to war crimes, refusing to strengthen international law, will have to be accountable to history. The fight against terrorism cannot ignore human rights.

How can we live in freedom in these conditions? What freedom are we building when we know that hunger is depleting resources that will be irretrievable for the new generations? What freedom can there be without recognizing individuals' sexual and reproductive rights and the rights to different forms of sexuality and expressions of love? Living in freedom will be possible only if human rights, which are indivisible, universal and interdependent, are placed at the heart of the structure and policies of States and of the United Nations, only if States are secular, governed by all citizens and not by particular religious interests, and only if we correct the imbalance of power in the Security Council, which cannot be resolved solely by adding or removing Members, but rather by eliminating the right to the veto.

The United Nations, to fulfil its mission, must rise to the challenges of the new millennium. The United Nations cannot simply consist of Governments, as has been the case at this summit. Its democratic reform must be open to all contributions from social movements and democratic forces, in order to build a different world without poverty or exclusion. The United Nations must recover its mission. It must be of "We the peoples", or it will cease to be.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I will come back with some comments of my own later on.

The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Bamanga Tukur, Group Chairman of BHI Holdings Limited.

Mr. Tukur (BHI Holdings Limited): It is a great honour for me to have the unique opportunity to address this distinguished assembly of world leaders on behalf of the private sector. This High-level Meeting of the General Assembly is a milestone in the history of international public-private dialogue. I should like to express sincere appreciation to the Co-Chairpersons of the World Summit 2005. Their efforts to bring together distinguished heads of State or Government to deliberate on contemporary regional and global issues are to be applauded.

Allow me also to use this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a leader whose commitment to the values of the United Nations is outstanding. His intense work to ensure that this great Organization addresses the most critical issues of our time is remarkable.

This world summit is an important step, coming on the heels of the G-8 Meeting in Gleneagles, where historic decisions were taken concerning the development agenda. Of late, several initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) framework, have been put in place, focusing on the most basic issues of reducing poverty and delivering sustainable development. In spite of these actions, it is still widely agreed that much more needs to be done.

The goals being pursued by the General Assembly and the larger international community are of great importance and relevance to the private sector. In today's global society, business interests increasingly overlap with development objectives. Business operations — from microenterprises to multinationals — are greatly impacted by health, security and economic development factors. Adequate infrastructure, access to finance and better regulation would enhance foreign and domestic investment inflow. There is also a need to strengthen the capacity of private sector institutions to contribute towards sustainable development.

Business and economic development reinforce one another; they are infinitely compatible. Business is good for development and development is good for business. Business development is central; it is the key to opening the door of opportunity for employment and the ability to prosper. Business leaders are acutely aware of that linkage. We are undertaking responsible business practices, such as conducting transparent transactions, investing in local infrastructure and implementing programmes to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, which are part of the Millennium Development Goal objectives.

The United Nations Global Compact initiative provides the enabling context for the private sector to participate actively in the development effort. The Global Compact advocates that corporate strategies and operations be rooted in core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

Business is a willing and able partner in the call to raise living standards for billions of people. In order

to maximize our common contribution to the development of stable economies, a business-friendly climate is essential. An enabling environment encourages entrepreneurship, allows local companies to thrive and attracts foreign investment. It offers companies a fair chance to achieve returns. Political stability, good governance, clear property rights and reasonable tax structures are just some of the essential factors for fostering private sector growth.

The least developed countries will continue to need special attention and aid because of their particular circumstances. The effectiveness of such assistance can be improved by applying business know-how and proven business solutions, and by building valuable partnerships between public and private sector actors. In that regard, it is heart-warming that the African Business Roundtable (ABR), over which I preside, was identified in the United Nations Millennium Project report as a critical partner for attaining development goals. As the only continent-wide, pan-African grouping of business leaders, the ABR and other private sector groupings accept that enormous responsibility and will meet the challenge through our resolve. Poverty can be made history only if the bad habits of autocracy and corruption are replaced with democracy, good governance and accountability.

In conclusion, allow me to express the confidence of the business sector in the General Assembly. Its commitment to addressing the challenges facing the goals set at the Millennium Summit is encouraging. Its support is needed to empower the private sector to contribute fully to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development worldwide, especially in Africa and the diaspora. It represents a new dawn for Africa.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): There are no more speakers on my list for this part of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

Given the lateness of the hour, I will say just a few words to the Assembly.

First, as President of the General Assembly, I want to express my deep regret that the outcome document was adopted before some speakers made their statements. This meeting, as members know, was seriously delayed because of the length of the interventions, which were supposed to be limited to five minutes but rarely were, and world leaders were leaving New York one by one at a time when a very important document was to be adopted.

I am the first to regret that the decision was made to finish the deliberations after the Governments had spoken, and therefore that some speakers had to wait. Their statements certainly deserved a full audience. I count approximately 80 delegations present, and I commend those that have been here so faithfully. All of us here have a duty to spread the word. We also have an obligation, via any statements that may be issued to the press, to make sure that their message is sent. I also know that this Meeting is being broadcast live all over the world via the United Nations webcast.

Those message are absolutely crucial. I myself was Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. I was in Somalia, Mozambique and the Sudan, and I was proud to work side by side with civil society, non-governmental organizations, banks, trade unions and churches. They are extremely important partners. That might ring hollow to those present here at this late hour, but I really want to assure them that, in the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, I will do my very best to make sure that their voices are heard.

We also need the regional organizations; we need civil society; we need the non-governmental organizations. The United Nations cannot exist if we in this Hall do not introduce two realities. One reality is the dreams and aspirations of people throughout the world, many of whom are members of the organizations represented here. They are absolutely crucial if we are to bring vitality into the United Nations. The United Nations is facing a serious situation right now, and we need that help. So the first reality that has to be brought into this Hall is the expectations and dreams of the people of the world, and those here represent that.

The second reality that also needs to be brought into these rooms is the real problems in the world: the poverty, the starving children, the sick — particularly those suffering from preventable diseases — the natural disasters, the environmental threats, the growing suspicions and fear that exist in this world. All those realities need to come in here, too, and those present represent that.

I just want to tell them that I appreciate enormously their understanding, if they still have understanding. I highly appreciate their stamina and

patience in coming here and sending their message to the world, and hope that they will consider us partners — partners at an historic stage, when multilateralism is at stake. We will work together and I very much count on their support. We need each other.

With those words, I thank everyone for their presence. I will certainly remember everything they have said. They will see it, hopefully, in my speeches in the year to come. I know that the members of the delegations here will also spread the word, but we will also think of other ways to make the voices that have been raised heard in this Hall in years to come. I thank everyone for their contributions.

I also want to thank the staff here, including the interpreters who have been struggling day and night and the wonderful team from General Assembly Affairs, which has faithfully been at our side here as Gabon and Sweden have co-chaired this Meeting.

This is the end of the biggest summit that, I think, has ever taken place, and the document that was adopted — prematurely, unfortunately, for some of those here — was extremely welcome. Circumstances were such that the decision was perhaps understandable.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I shall close this meeting by inviting representatives of the peoples and countries of the world to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the High-level Plenary Meeting

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I declare closed the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005.

The meeting rose at 9.55 p.m.